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Brothers look to their sisters to supply them with wakus for their daughters to marry. A waku's importance to a man is no less than that of a son. A brother always makes presents to his sister for her son, as well as to her husband.

A brother, but no sister, may eat a youth's kill of kangaroo, emu, or ceremonial wife has had a child. A sister is supposed to help carry the cauldron bones of the first kangaroo or emu killed by her brother, just as she helps carry her dead brother's bones.

A brother and father always know and keep the tabooed names of a girl. No woman knows her ceremonial name.

There are two sets of behavior in the relationship of a brother and sister that must be treated together (see pages 110-112 for an interpretation of the Wakinu and Mirriri customs). First, she is called wakinu by all her brothers. In its primary sense, wakinu means a person without kin, and secondarily "worthless" or, more expressively, "rubbish." Bumaiyama, the trickster hero, a much-loved scoundrel who lived in the olden days and broke all laws, is always wakinu after some particularly fantastic escapade of his has been retold. Wakinu is used during a fight as an appropriate term against one's enemies. Secondly, no brother can hear his sister sworn at or hear obscene speech in her presence, such as is very common otherwise. Ordinarily, when a man's anger rises, he immediately bursts into an almost pyrotechnical display of abuse, most of it centering around sex, breaking of incest taboos, peculiarities of the genitalia, irregularities in the sexual act between men and women, et cetera. The aversion to hearing or using such profanity in front of a sister is called "mirriri" (ear-thing). It really means, "My ear can't hear obscenity in front of my sister." An older man said, "It is just the same as if I had been hit on the head with a club when I hear that." Another said, "My heart jumps and stops, jumps and stops, when I hear that mirriri."

Malambunu had come home and found his food unprepared by his wife, Dangra. A quarrel resulted in which he called her matamakini (incestuous). She did not swear at him. A near-clan brother of Dangra, Badunga, heard the swearing and became very angry. He gathered a bundle of spears, hooked them one by one to his spear-thrower, and threw them at a large number of the women in the native camp, including Dangra. An investigation showed that every one of the women at whom he threw was called yeppa by him.

Balli, an adolescent girl, called her own mother dalardumaru (big vagina).

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underlies this most fundamental lateral relationship. Given the correlated basic complex of the junior levirate, by which the next eldest brother inherits a dead man's wife, it would be impossible not to have polygyny; and it is rather difficult to see how the entire system of kinship could exist without the levirate in some form.

A man always tries to obtain his actual mother's brother's daughter; if he cannot get her, he tries to marry someone as near to her in consanguinity as possible.

Usually an older male dué and male galle have an understanding that their sons and daughters shall marry. Such a betrothal could occur before the birth of either child. Sometimes a gawel will promise his wife's next daughter to his waku. Thus, even before birth there is a recognized relationship between dué and galle.

There are several degrees of marriage. As soon as a boy is circumcised and old enough to understand and remember what is told him, his galle is pointed out. At a similar age a galle mielk has her dué dramo shown to her. This is done by the male parents of both children.

The young men and women older than the two usually tease the young couple with somewhat obscene jokes about their relationship and its meaning in their physical behavior. The youngsters are usually shy and ashamed when confronted with such humor; however, as small children, when away from the elders, they play house together. They are fully aware of the sexual act and of sex differences.

About the time facial hair appears upon a boy and the breasts of a girl swell, that is, when sexual intercourse is in their power and of interest to both, they start making love trysts in the bush. They may not copulate at first, but they simulate the act in close contact.

When a girl has her first menses the mother and older women put her inside a house (no special one) and leave her. She is supposed to remain in one place and move with digging sticks as crutches. This represents the myth of the two old women who made the present world, walking with the aid of digging sticks; the older of the two was menstruating. It is believed that menstruation is due to the sexual act, and that the blood is not dangerous to a woman since it comes from the abdomen and not the heart.

When a girl's first menses are over, her father (gawel to her dué) says to her mother (mokul to her dué), "You go make a house for them and fix a camp for them. She is big enough now" (see page 129).

After this, a young couple start living together and are recognized

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waku, gawel and waku, and one case has been reported of momelker and dumungur. This last is very rare and has a strong taboo against it. All relationships except the above are completely taboo, and no one would any more think of such an extra-legal union than a normal man in our society would consider a liaison with his own mother. All the above affairs would be with distant relatives and not the actual ones. 837

Much indignation usually is caused by a gawel-waku liaison if discovered, though several were observed. This sentiment would not be that of the injured wife or husband alone, but of the tribe generally. Men having such a relationship with waku or momelker would be called dogs and considered evil-doers even by their own people, who might be defending them at the time from the attacks of the girl's husbands and relatives. The woman would most certainly receive a severe beating and occasionally be killed. 837 684

The regulation that a younger brother is not allowed near an older brother's wife whereas an older brother may be near a younger brother's of course applies here, since, except through a wrong marriage, all men who call each other brothers would call the same women galle, and they in turn would call these men dué. Even with such limitations the dué-galle affair is a most common form of adultery because, with the exception of this one taboo, there is no restriction to deter the pair or to make the most orthodox Murngin feel he is doing anything wrong. The mono-kaminyer relationship is the next least provocative of social condemnation. Of course, this would not be actual father's mother and brother's son's son, but a younger woman and a man in this relationship. 837 [607]

The men's attitude toward sexual union is one of extreme interest. While some speak but little of it, others make sex, food, and war the three subjects of their conversation. The women, however, seem even more interested than the men. They, too, vary considerably in their attitude; some are continually in trouble because of attempting to satisfy their desires by seducing young men, while others remain quiet and faithful to one man. All the men testified that there were no cold women; or rather, as they put it, all women were interested in the sexual relation. The evidence seems to verify their contentions; but caution must be exercised here since no man would admit that women were not interested in him. However, many of the men complained that their wives and other female relatives had too great an interest. 831 [838]

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831 The woman's attitude will be illustrated under the head of runaway unions.

836 574 578 If a man had a sweetheart in his early youth and the affair terminated after he had acquired his proper mates, he must always feed her if she comes to his camp, and she must always feed him if he goes to hers. Wives, however, always complain and cause trouble for the man who tries to follow this custom because of their jealous fear that he may return to the affair. They are anything but hospitable to a husband's former sweetheart who visits their camps. An understanding husband will allow hospitality, particularly if he and his wife's former lover are good friends and if there has been no early trouble between the two. Otherwise, the husband, too, would forbid a wife to feed her former paramour.

836 584 583 Lovers' unions often develop into permanent ones. If there is a dispute about a girl between two young men, one of whom has been living with her, it is likely that, all else being equal, the lover would get the girl, for, say the old men, "They were sweethearts." If the woman should be given to the other man, the lovers frequently run away, and the tribe later recognizes the union.

837 A number of customs are connected with sweethearting. At night the husbands generally make their wives sit in their own camps. A favorite time for the assignation of lovers, therefore, is during the day when the women are accessible out in the bush and mangrove jungle, where they gather bulbs and shellfish—in groups for companionship and for fear of being stolen. The young man sneaks up near her and taps a stone on the ground. The woman is on the alert and knows what this means. She tells her companions that she is thirsty, or with some other excuse slips away to join her lover.

Sometimes a man has a woman's friend—always a woman—drop a certain type of string in the loved one's basket. If the woman belongs to the Yiritja moiety and the man to the Dua he puts an opossum fur string into it; if he is Yiritja and she Dua, he uses a red parrot feather string. This, of course, occurs only after he feels fairly confident that his advances will have a favorable reception. She replies through her woman friend, and arrangements are made for a time and place.

578 837 The following is an account of the operation of this custom, its failure, the feelings of the relatives involved, and the general camp scene during trouble over adultery. Such camp brawls are not infre-

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we circumcised those young men. That blood made her sick." One old man spoke up and said, "That blood made her sick. It makes women ill when they touch us after the Djungguan. It is the spirit in that blood that does this. It is the totem, not the wooden emblem, but the spirit inside with the power name. He is in that blood. A woman cannot touch it or it will make her sick." 753 826 784

Smaller rituals are performed by two or three individuals to cure someone who is ailing. Frequently women rub red ocher over their bodies because of an ailment, this being but an abbreviation of its use in the larger ceremonies. Red ocher string is tied around the head or body to cure a headache or abdominal pain. This act, too, is but a shortening of the ritual in which decorated string is placed around the head or body in the larger ceremonies. 755

Larger rituals are definitely used to remove pain. Certain parts of the Djungguan are designed to take away the pain from the boy who is being circumcised. The women relatives whip themselves in order to transfer the pain from the boy to themselves. The head of the boy's penis, they also say, is a turtle's head, so the cutting of the foreskin cannot hurt him since it is not his flesh being cut but that of the animal. These statements are also supposed to remove the pain from the boy. 785 826 831

Other rituals, which assure success in war, are demonstrably only elaborated magical practices. The gaingar spears represent the head of the Dua and Yiritja moieties. The souls of the dead of the moieties are supposed to be in each weapon. The ceremonial throwing of the spears to assure the killing of an enemy and to prevent the killing of their own men is definitely of a magical nature, the power of these ceremonies depending upon the souls' clustering around the spear just as the power of the magical killing stick depends upon the souls which cluster about its point. 778 789 775

The bone magic ceremony used in the maringo fighting (see Chapter VI, Warfare) is also an elaborate ceremony focused upon the magical idea of the soul's being associated with a bone relic. In earlier parts of this chapter the individual treats the bone in a ceremonial way to practice his magic against his enemies. Both the gaingar and the maringo ceremony from one point of view are elaborate magical practices participated in by the group and led by the ceremonial or war leader.

All the rituals, particularly the Narra, which celebrates the ascendancy of the clan totem, are commonly used to purify the group of 751 783

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by each other while dancing inside it. While the messengers are away and the new trench is being dug, the Gunabibi cycle of songs and dances from the single male sea gull to the four Muits is gone through by the leader and his chorus.

2. The snakes are allowed to dance in the kartdjur, but none of the others except the palm tree are allowed to go inside it.

After the Gunabibi cycle, a single man filled with sexual desire and looking for a mate is danced. Then a man representing a single woman, also sexually hungry and looking for a mate, is danced. And finally the two together perform a dance; meeting at the entrance to the kartdjur, they simulate copulation but do not enter the "well."

The moon is now full, and people have been coming from the other clans to participate in the ceremony. Messages are usually brought by them that the two Yiritja snakes are coming with more people. Visitors and messengers take part in the dance around the kartdjur. All the men in the ceremony dance rock pythons copulating. The last dance of the entire series is that of the blue-tongued lizard. He dances in from a long way in the bush and goes inside the kartdjur. The appearance of this symbol indicates to all that a transition is taking place in the Gunabibi.

Native Interpretation.—"The kartdjur is that head inside the woman's vagina. It is all the same as her marn-bu [clitoris]. The crescent shape [shown by curve of fingers] is the way the two women laid down in the house before the snake swallowed them."

G. YERMERLINDI

1. The Yeritja make Yermerlindi—two poles symbolizing the snake and a palm tree, and covered with blood.
2. The Yiritja camp; Dua give presents to the Yiritja.
3. The neophytes are placed on the kartdjur and sweat is placed on their eyes. Various dances include a clown element, the opossums, the Wawilak sisters, and finally blue-tongued lizard.
4. The initiates see Yermerlindi and are instructed and warned by the old men.
5. The Yermerlindi are knocked down and put in the kartdjur, and the men put blood on themselves.

1. During the last period, when the kartdjur is being used, the Yiritja moiety men participating in the Gunabibi ceremony have been making the yermerlindi emblems. They are about fifteen feet long and two and a half wide. They have a pole as a solid core and are

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Masculinity and Femininity as Organizing Principles of the Social Organization as Expressed in the Rituals

562 182 831 In addition to isolating the symbols of the snake as the rainy season and the snake as the men's age-grading group, we can separate out a further symbol which permeates all their thinking and underlies their elaborate organization and social structure. Masculinity is inextricably interwoven with ritual cleanliness, and femininity is equally entwined with the concept of uncleanliness, the former being the sacred principle and the latter the profane. This sexual dichotomy and its correlation with the Murngin beliefs of what are the sacred and profane elements of the group, are again connected with a further principle of human relations, namely, that of superordination and subordination.

562 182 626 771 The superordinate male group, made sacred through the ritual initiation of its individual members into the sacred group, and maintained as a unit by continual participation in the rituals, subordinates the female group which is unified by virtue of exclusion from the ceremonies and of ritual uncleanliness. The superordination of the male is made a mystery by the nexus of masculinity, sacredness, and the seasonal reproductive cycle. Within this mystery lies one of the strongest and most effective sanctions found in Murngin society. The male sacredness becomes more sacrosanct and "holy" as it progresses into the graded deeper mysteries through the age-graded initiations, and this sacredness controls the profane and less sacred elements of society by the invocation of the direct negative sanctions of ritual: "If you young men do not do this, such and such will happen to you." "This man married wrong or that woman has had illegal sexual relations, and our whole group is endangered ["made sick"]." Obviously it behooves everyone to live up to the code of the society; and if he does not, the whole group feels compelled to act to prevent the contagion of his harmful actions causing a general catastrophe. The ceremonial mysteries of the male group, then, help subordinate not only the women and younger boys but also the men themselves, since they too cannot profane the sacred mysteries by some impure and illegal act; if they do, the male group feels obliged to act. In other words, in the local organization of the whole social group from the pinnacle of the old men's age grade to the bottom age grade of women and children, and from the most remote northeastern clan of Wessel Island to the most southeastern one in the far interior, there is a general subordination of the several institutions of the social organization

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diella, Djungguan and Ulmark introduce communion rites, as does the Gunabibi, in the flying fox episode. The communion in all of the rituals except the Gunabibi seems fairly differentiated from the general symbols, but in the Gunabibi it is part of the snake idea (the initiate becomes part of the snake in the dance).

The animals-running-away-from-the-women myth-symbol given primary expression in a number of the Ulmark segments is also of secondary interest in the Djungguan and Gunabibi. The interpretation of the snake-swallowing-the-women symbol gives a sufficient understanding of the Wawilak myth to fit the animals-running-away symbol into its place. The animals leave the women and jump into the python's pool because the women are ritually impure. They arise from the pool and roar like snakes. The animals here are symbolically taken into the snake's totem well and made clean by their immersion, which is demonstrated by their roaring and acting like the snake. Further, they are being swallowed by the wet season. In the Gunabibi also the animals are running away from the women and are being made clean in the well. In the Ulmark the rainy season theme is made more explicit by having the men remove all their ornaments and clothing and have to resemble men emaciated from lack of food. This occurs in the first section after the animals (kangaroos) have run away. It seems a possible hypothesis that the Djunkgao loss of the totems and the Wawilak loss of the animals are analogous and to the native mind, in general, the same thing. This was not told to me specifically of Murngin dogma by the native interpreters, but was often said generally about the Wawilak and Djunkgao myths and the behavior of the two sets of sisters.

The Gunabibi directly introduces the further theme of the reproductive cycle. In the Djungguan, Marndiella, and Ulmark it is subsumed under the general seasonal cycle, but in the Gunabibi it has a definite part of its own in the symbolization; and when the reproductive cycle does find expression in the song and dance symbols the seasonal cycle is understood to lie within it as a part of the process of reproduction. It can be said that part of the fundamental structure of the Gunabibi is the expression of reproductive activities in symbolical detail. First only the male animals dance, then only the females, then the two simulate copulation; and when the human species perform, they actually copulate ceremonially. The ceremonial aspect of copulation is emphasized by the exchange of tribal brothers'

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wives; repetition of ordinary profane sexual relations of spouses would lack the dramatic force of the copulation of strange mates.

(Incidentally, the fact that the copulation of animals is simulated by male dancers and that the human symbols of reproduction actually copulate demonstrates once more how the rituals symbolically manipulate functions of nature which cannot be directly controlled, whereas the direct form of expression is exercised when possible.)

The reproductive symbol is related point by point to the seasonal symbol by the knowledge of the seasons when the animals go about not paired, but singly, and the time of year mating and reproduction take place. The reproductive cycle of mating and birth is manifest in most of the sections of the four Wawilak ceremonies, is explicitly stated in the Gunabibi symbolism, and is latent in the concept of the season's fluctuation. The emphasis of interest in natural phenomena is shifted slightly from the seasonal variation as the organizing principle of all nature's complexities to the reproductive behavior of the animals and plants, which again generalizes on all the activities of nature. In brief, the concepts of the reproductive cycle and seasonal alternation state the same generalization and are given the same symbols in the myth.

The Gunabibi, by bringing the reproductive cycle into explicit symbolical statement in a number of segments, by retaining in others the usual seasonal symbols, and by combining seasonal and reproductive symbols in still others, gives us a better understanding of the Murngin concepts of the order of natural phenomena. The fertility of the plant and animal species is seen to be in a time relationship, and this order of time is conceived as a seasonal one. This gives us a more elaborate knowledge of the general thinking which underlies the two sister myths and Murngin totemism in general. Furthermore, the Gunabibi ritual completely demonstrates the fact that the Murngin realize the necessity of sexual intercourse as part of the reproductive cycle.

When the Liaalaomir python says, "I see we talk a different language—it is better then that we all have the same ceremonies together for we own the same maraiin," he is stating a fundamental fact of the Murngin social structure. What he is saying is that the clans ("different languages") tend to break down the larger unity with their open or suppressed antagonisms, and the ceremonies and totems tend to establish unity through the underlying agency of the rituals and myths in which Yurlunggur appears.

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She said, "That is a thing that you have liked."

He then called that country Mon-gu-li which is the eastern part of Elcho Island, which is nearest Cape Wessel Island. The name is a power name for the labia minora. 773X

After he had had intercourse with the woman the man went to sleep. He then went out in the bush and gathered some yams for food. He cooked them and made a big fire and roasted them. He then made a yam totem emblem. He slept until morning. In the morning he heard Lapar, the dove pigeon, crying out. He got up and went down to the well and got that yam ranga where he had placed it in a basket. He took it out of the basket and also took the yams he had gathered out of the same basket and put them on a piece of paper bark. The yams had been cooked and he mashed them into a thick dough. He put his sweat on that bread. He then gave it to the young boys who had not been initiated. The boys ate it. Green ants appeared from everywhere. They bit that old man all over his body. They also bit the young boys. The green ants' power name is Koikoi. This old man had done wrong giving the young boys this power bread without their first being initiated. The young boys left the food and ran away. This country is now called Nartinga (ant bite). Narti is the name of a green ant. This is in the southern part of Elcho Island. It is a hill there. A sea hawk, Dimala, made that nest. He called that country Garnapai. Nearby is a well which a tree snake made in the old days. Malawerango saw thunder and lightning at this time. He said to the boys who were with him, "I think a very big rain is coming. You go one way and I'll go the other."

He went out to where the red ocher was, and the others went into the jungle. The jungle people, who were mokois, saw them and laughed. You can hear those same mokois laugh in that jungle today. Malawerango and the people who followed him found a native companion. This native companion had come from the Dai country. The native companion called that little part of the country Naiyawalinga (the nest of a native companion).

MOTHER AND SON

In the time of Wongar a Gwiyamil boy was groaning in the camp of his mother. His mother asked him what was the matter but he did not answer and kept on groaning. 773X 831● 522

"Shall I give you honey?" she asked.

"No," he groaned.

"Do you want some kangaroo?"

"No," he groaned.

"Would you like some barrimundi?"

"No," he groaned.

"Would you like some turtle eggs?"

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X773 "No," he groaned.
"Or porpoise?"
• 831 "No," he groaned.
522 The mother named all the good things to eat and drink and all the other good things in the world, but the boy only groaned in reply. Then she said, "Would you like my vagina?"

"Yes," he cried, "that is what I want."

(An old man told this story to me with a group of younger men around. They all laughed with much amusement at the conclusion. It is another story based on the incest theme. It also shows the two main interests in the life of the Murngin, sex and food.)

AN INCESTUOUS MOTHER-IN-LAW

X113 Three men, Daura, Burnangura, and Kalimara, who were Warumeri from Elcho Island, took a stringy-bark canoe for Wessel Island. They paddled and paddled. They were close to Wessel Island, when a big wind came up. They tried to paddle against the wind, but it was too strong.

"We'll stop. The canoe will have to go its own way." The canoe turned north and westward. In the morning they saw land. It was an island. It was that small island north of Marung and the Crocodile Group. They went ashore. They saw a great many tracks of people who live there. The people there talk Kolpa. The three men said to themselves, "They are just the same as we are."

There was an old woman there who had three daughters. She made three camps and gave a daughter to each man. These daughters were Dua. After she had decided to give them to the men she changed her mind and decided to give only one daughter to one man and she persuaded her sisters to give a daughter to each of the other two men. When it was evening the first old woman went to sleep. When it was dark she sat with her head in her hands and thought. The husband of her daughter started fondling his new wife. The old woman sneaked up and looked. She blew on the fire in front of their hut and groaned. "I am cold," she moaned. She lied. She lay down and pretended to sleep and started snoring, but she had one eye open.

The man raised up and prepared to copulate with the girl, but the old woman crawled in the hut and pushed the daughter on one side and lay down in the middle.

"I am very cold," she moaned.

In the second hut one of the other men had arisen and was preparing to have sexual intercourse with his new wife when the second old woman crawled in between and said, "I am cold. I want to sleep here."

In the third tent the third man was lying on top of his wife when the third old woman pushed him off and crawled in between the two. "I am cold," she said.

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X-773 our own women so we can do as we please. We won't have any fooling with our mothers-in-law. No man likes to copulate with an old woman."

They all went back and stayed in their own country.

Bamapama Garma Ceremony from Marunga Island

796 The significant idea in the following ceremony is that the man belongs
533 to the Dua moiety and the woman is also a member of that division of the
831 tribe. This garma is used for the same occasions as the others. The song sequence starts with (1) salt water, and the significance of singing the water of the ocean is that it is supposed to be carrying the coffin or hollow log into the native camp which has the deeper symbolism that the soul is being taken to the totem well. At the end of each song the name of the big well is called out and the chorus sings out "Yai!" The second song is the sea. Then follow: (3) small porpoise; (4) Marunga well country; (5) Marunga well country; (6) Marunga well country. All the above songs are sung while the men are transporting a large phallic emblem from the men's camp, where this garma totem is made, to the place within the general camp where the dance is held. The phallic emblem is painted with red ocher and colored generally as other totemic emblems are. The carving is done to show that the penis has been circumcised and also subincised.[3] The crowd of men dancers walk along with the phallic emblem. Frequently the hollow log coffin is also carried; sometimes this is designed for the final disposal of the bones of one of their members, or it may be merely a ritualistic observance.

796 The next dance is (7) porpoise; (8) man making a fish spear, is usually
535 performed as a solo dance with the chorus joining in; (9) the spear is
831 carried by Mar-ler-wer-ang-o, who is the Bamapama or trickster of the Marunga people and is looked upon as a man with a large penis which is symbolical of his lechery. The solo dancer who takes the part of Bamapama dances Bamapana with his spear watching the tide coming in. His spear is the phallic emblem. He is supposed to be extremely happy, and while he dances he calls out "Ha—ha—ha—ha," as he laughs to himself. He holds the phallic emblem up straight against his groin. He pretends to sneak up on a fish, spears and kills it, and breaks its head with his foot. The singer and dancer then take up the story of Bamapama when he sees two women come along the seashore just at sundown. They are supposed to be hunting little sea birds along the jungle edge on Marunga Island.

Marlerwerango or Bamapama sees them. He leaves the fishing and sneaks up on them. A man dances the part of the two women. The phallic emblem of Bamapama is thrust between the legs of the man as he stoops

[304] [3] The Marunga people, in company with certain of the Goyder River people, practice subincision, although the subincision is not a ritual. The cutting is usually done by two young men who operate on each other.

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over symbolically to gather in the sea birds. While Bamapama does this he laughs uproariously. He then attempts to hide his phallic emblem but the two women see it because it is too large for him to hide. He then changes his tactics, raises it high in the air and shows it to them to frighten them. The group of people who are watching this dance are always extremely amused at this point and frequently some of them literally hold their sides with laughter. The two women leave, but he sneaks up on them and once more ritually has intercourse with them and again laughs and laughs. Even today one can see the holes in the ground which are the vaginas of the two women, and one can also see the stone phallus of Bamapama.

When Bamapama has finished his relations with the two women he takes a canoe, and at this point the chorus sings (10), canoe. He paddles hard and rapidly. The men's chorus imitates this with the movement of their spear-throwers. He arrives at a Marunga camp on Elcho Island. It is daylight there when he arrives and it has taken him all night to make this journey. He leaves the canoe and camps by the well which is out in the tidal flats. To indicate this (11), the name of the camp, is sung. The camp carries a number of meanings, according to native interpretation: "The Ding Ding people say, 'Mari, you try a song, we want to listen to you.' He sang his garma song. 'This one is mine,' he said. They said, 'No, that is wrong, that is for a ranga [high totem]. We'll show you the proper song.' They sang it then. He said, 'This one is a garma song. You look out for the ranga, I'll look out for the garmas. I'm going to get some food for you.' These people were his kutaras. When he said this, his kutaras sang the chorus of the Narra, and the Marunga man left them that song. 'All right, kutara, you can make rangas. We can start it but we want that Narra to go to you.' The two together sang Narra and called out the names of Marunga people because they were kutara and mari. Marlerwerango and the Ding Ding men sang, and the two Djunkgao women were there."

House of Marlerwerango or Bamapama (12) is then sung, followed by (13) the picking of banyan tree fruit. The men dance the picking of the fruit that is found in the trees at the Marunga land of Elcho Island. They dance and sing fish net (14), which refers to the catching of the soul of the dead, and (15) a pelican catching fish. This again refers to the soul being caught, the fish being the soul and the pelican the sacred element.

A small unidentified sea bird (16) ends the garma ceremony of the Marunga people. It must be stated that all the garma songs are capable of considerable variation; but each of them has a general pattern which is adhered to in any one of the dances which are given for the various garma occasions.

773 Yeramalindji (Yalmanindji), a blackened mass, still in its original
796 shape, lying in the Nanggoru.
171 One special feature of this "Mother Place" was that on each of the walls of both the Kanalina (the oval billabong) and the Nanggoru
[532] (the semi-circular trench or "river"), the rainbow serpent, here called Muit, was engraved. Apart from what informants said, there
[346] was no mistaking the drawing. The walls were of hard clay and about 2 feet and a little more in depth.

Finally, the "Mother" ritual has spread north from the Lower Victoria River as far as Port Keats, where in 1944 the elders were assimilating the doctrine of the "Old Woman" (exoterically), but the desirable mother (esoterically), and the bullroarer with snake symbolism.*

The Appeal of the Kunapipi

771 A cult which spreads throughout a vast region as indicated in the above outline, and spreads irresistibly, must satisfy a spiritual or
796 psychological need and make a captivating appeal. There is no mistaking the grip which the doctrine of the "Mother" and the Snake has on the initiated, or their fervour and faith. But, why does the cult appeal and grip in this way?

Let us outline its significant features. It highlights the maternal, nourishing, reproductive, and indeed creative, principle in nature and man, though not denying the male principle. That is, it associates the cycle of the tropical seasons, and the increase of human beings and of natural species with the concept of Mother—of birth from the womb.
[831] Further, it correlates this with sexual activity in which the male or inseminating principle is involved. In the former aspect, we have the Mother, symbolized by the ceremonial "Mother Place", and in particular by the earth womb, the *nanggoru*, for, indeed, she is the earth. In the latter case we see the symbolism of the Great Snake: the Rainbow Snake, and the Yermalindji.

796 Further, in the ritual, the male actors simulate sex intercourse,
786 which symbolizes both the impregnation or else the quickening of the Mother herself, and also the intercourse of the animals represented in the rite. It is done for her and through her for them and all nature. Finally, the actual sexual intercourse between the actors and selected women near the ceremonial ground, as part of the total ritual, not only witnesses to the indispensable rôle of women in reproduction, but also makes the "Mother's" life-producing principle or power operative. Just as in arid Australia, the actors cause blood from their arm vein or genital organ to flow on to the symbolic representation of the totem or totemic ancestor, giving it or
[789] him power to increase its kind; so too in Arnhem Land the actors'

* Mr. F. Parkes, a member of the Air Force, gained the confidence of these men, and recorded all he could.

121 562 771 796 [831] [776] consequently irreligious. Woman, or more precisely her unique ability to create, together with man's power to inseminate, has become a feature of native religion in these areas, crystallized in the concept of the Mother, whom we see manifested in (for instance) the Kunapipi. The aura thus surrounding, and radiating from, this Fertility Mother has been extended in some degree to native women to-day.

121 794 773 776 Another problem arising from the study of the Kunapipi cult which needs detailed consideration, is that of individual origins. Throughout the greater part of the Territory, specific cults have been inspired either by one or, in some cases, by two or three Ancestral Beings. Through their own personality and power, it is said, they succeeded in indoctrinating the whole social group in which they found themselves. They brought with them what appear to have been new ideologies, with attendant ritual, emblems, songs, and mythology in which they themselves now play a dominant part. This individual aspect is apparent in the case of the Kunapipi Mother, who arose from the waters of the Roper River Mouth (*vide* Chapter XI), bringing with her the main features of what we now call the Kunapipi cult. The same principle is evident in the appearance of the Djanggawul (*vide* Chapter I) and of Laintjung (Chapter I) in north-eastern Arnhem Land; both these Beings appear to have inspired virile cults, substantiated by mythology which details their adventures, their activities and beliefs. The society itself, of course, must have been more or less receptive to the introduction of these religious beliefs. That is to say, the religious leader, whether Kunapipi, [182] Laintjung or the Djanggawul Brother or Sisters, was able to impress his (or her) own point of view on that society, which in turn was willing to adopt his views and ideas, so giving social impetus to the introduced religion.

This aspect of individual origins, in relation to specific Australian Aboriginal cults, is an important one. The contention, which may be substantiated by mythology and the traditional song-cycles, is that a powerful personality—such as the Great Mother, the acknowledged spiritual leader and inspiration of the Kunapipi cult—possessed of ability beyond the ordinary, can and does exert his or her influence on the society in which he is either temporarily or permanently living; and that influence, helped by favourable circumstances, is sufficient to establish a cult which attracts adherents, and becomes in its own right an important social function and institution.

121 771 773 794 776 The migration of Ancestral Beings, like Kunapipi and others, into a particular society, bringing with them a religious cult, is a fairly general phenomenon in Aboriginal religious life. Major Ancestral Beings very rarely arise in the country of the people with whom they are mythologically associated, or in the society which serves as the "incubator" for their specific ideology. Rather, the individual (in

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tion of other natural species—all phenomena which are necessary for the continuance and well-being of the people themselves. In keeping with this doctrine, a natural development has been the stress on procreation—the importance of pregnancy and child-birth, and the essential sequence of sexual intercourse and conception, expressed particularly in ritual and long song cycles. 771 789 794 [842]

In order to understand Kunapipi cult life and belief, it is necessary to summarize very briefly some of the other cults which flourish beside it in this area.

The Djanggawul myth, consisting of several hundreds of lengthy songs, relates the adventures of two men and two women, who in the Dreaming Period landed at Port Bradshaw, on the north-east Arnhem Land coast. They had journeyed across the sea from an island called Bralku, now known as the *dua* home of the dead, somewhere beyond Groote Eylandt. These Ancestral Beings are known generally as the Djanggawul, but had their own personal names. The leader was Djanggawul himself; the two women were his sisters, the younger Maralaitj, and the older Pildjiwuraroiju; and their companion was Bralbral, who plays only a minor part in this great cycle. In their canoe they brought a large conical *ngainmara* mat, which is now used particularly by the women, and also certain sacred *rangga* sticks possessing life-giving qualities. The mat symbolized the uterus; the *rangga* sticks were penes, and when not being used ritually, were kept hidden in the *ngainmara*. 773 [538] [778] [831]

As the Djanggawul journeyed along the coast, they met other Ancestral Beings like Laintjung and the Baijini, and Spirits such as Pomapoma, Kultana, Woijal, Burulu-burulu and others; but none of these had the procreating powers of the great Djanggawul. Djanggawul had an elongated penis; and his two sisters had long clitori which dragged on the ground as they walked. Djanggawul had sexual relations with his sisters, so that they were continually pregnant. From time to time, at the camps where they stayed, he would lift their clitori to one side, and put his hand up into the uteri to remove many children of both sexes: these were the ancestors of the present aborigines. The song cycle features the perpetual pregnancy of the two sisters, their uteri being likened to the *ngainmara* mats which they brought with them, while the people who are removed from them in childbirth are the *rangga*. It is said that a person's bones are like *rangga*, inherited from both the father and mother, who in turn inherited theirs through the generations of ancestors, right back to the Eternal Times of Djanggawul and the creative heroes. Therefore, at death, a person's material remains, as well as his spiritual substance, must be treated with respect, and surrounded by ritual. [776] [831] 773 533 [827] [764]

An important aspect of this myth, second only to the theme of fertility, concerns the institution of sacred ritual. In the beginning, 773 796

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Territory,[4] artists depict human beings, as totemites, flowing from the uterus of the Mother into the round "ring place" (or ceremonial ground) for the performance of sacred rites. The "ring place" is itself the uterus of the Mother. To-day, in the really important sacred ceremonies, a special ring place is used for the performance of these rituals. As the neophytes leave the camp for the sacred ground, they themselves are said to become increasingly sacred, and to enter the Mother; they go into her uterus, the ring place, as happened in the beginning. When the ritual is completed the Mother "lets them out"; they emerge from the ring place, and pass once more into ordinary life. These ring places vary in shape from place to place, but all symbolize the Mother's uterus. The sacred ceremonies associated with this Fertility Woman are called in pidgin English "Big Sunday", inferring a sacred atmosphere from the European connotation of the word Sunday, while the term refers also to "sandy place", the soft ground upon which the sacred dancing is performed. The appellation "Big Sunday", in some regions, may also be derived from the term "Centre" place, which refers to the sacred ceremonial ground.

All Kunapipi ritual, irrespective of region, has thus a common theme. We find in it the return to the Mother's uterus, and the eventual emergence, when the postulants come out from their sacred ritual refreshed, and as "new" men (that is, it is like a "rebirth"); this symbolic enactment of birth brings with it a renewal of ideals, energy and faith. Fertility and the supplying of food, sexual pleasure and satisfaction, solidarity within the group, and an undividing faith in the divine truth of the cult—all these elements are present. Food and sex, fundamental in human life, and consequently in religion, owe their continuance, it is said, to the Eternal Mother. It is not surprising that people living in such close proximity to nature, with few artificial distractions, should recognise the fundamental importance of female fertility, and see in it a central theme of religion.

* * * *

In north-eastern Arnhem Land, the Kunapipi cult is not yet deeply entrenched, since it has been introduced within comparatively recent times. Its earliest infiltration took place through the Reinbaranga (sometimes termed Rembranga, and localized in south-western Arnhem Land) and Bureru tribes and so into Milingimbi, where Professor L. Warner witnessed some of its rituals twenty years ago. From this centre it spread westwards towards Goulburn Islands and Oenpelli,[5] and eastwards to Elcho Island and Arnhem Bay. But it does not seem to have gripped, at that time, the imagina-

4. *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, *op. cit. Oceania*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, Plates I to III; and R. and C. Berndt, Aboriginal Art in Central-Western Northern Territory, *Meanjin*, Spring, 1950, pp. 183–188, ten plates.
5. R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Section IX.

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the Mother (or Mothers), represented quite often by Two Sisters even in central-western Northern Territory, is the creative Being; so from this point of view the Wauwalak cycle, now substantiating the introduced Kunapipi, should possess Two Sisters who are themselves creative Beings. Local belief however accords this status only to the Djanggawul; but since the Wauwalak are their daughters, the original doctrine is not greatly inconvenienced. The creative Mothers may still be the Djanggawul, making their appearance through the Wauwalak Sisters, while the Wauwalak themselves are the Mungamunga of the south.

The actual meaning of the name Kunapipi is not easy to discover. The cult itself, with its relevant ceremonies, and the myth that substantiates the ritual, is Kunapipi, and this, in most areas mentioned above, is translated as the "Mother", or "Old Woman". The term "old" in this context signifies status and age, although not elderly appearance. Dr. Warner[7] notes that Kunapipi (spelt "Gunabibi") is one name of the Pythons which swallowed the Wauwalak; but, as mentioned above, this writer stresses the importance of the Snakes at the expense of the Fertility Mothers, and this element is by far the most apparent in north-eastern Arnhem Land religion.

At Yirrkalla, the name Kunapipi is said to have two meanings. First, the word Kunapipi means "whistle-cock" (that is, a subincisure); for these ceremonies came up from the Rose and the Roper Rivers where subincision is general, whereas throughout the greater part of north-eastern Arnhem Land only circumcision is practised. The ceremonies of Kunapipi in the Yirrkalla region may also be termed *wiri:t* or *wira'i*, meaning "incisure". But Kunapipi means also the uterus of the Mother. That is, the incised penis symbolizes the snake (Python or Rainbow Snake), and the incisure itself the uterus. Symbolically, then, the subincised male member represents both the female and the male organs, essential in the process of fructification.

More generally, however, the term Kunapipi is said to mean the Mother, and in isolated cases the Snake, both being accepted versions. It is because Kunapipi is translated as Fertility Mother, through the greater part of the Northern Territory, that we have preferred to use that appellation.

A number of ceremonies throughout the northern half of the Northern Territory are associated with Fertility Mothers and Rainbow (or Great) Snakes; and it is possible that the majority of these cults are linked with one another, even if their outward expressions are dissimilar. This aspect requires intensive study, including the collection of mythological texts, and analysis of relevant ritual and songs. The Kunapipi cult, however, consists of certain distinctive elements, that are found throughout the areas we have mentioned.

7. L. Warner, *op. cit*, p. 294.

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For example, the Kunapipi held at Yirrkalla is essentially similar to that held at Birrundudu (towards the Western Australian border in central-western Northern Territory). There is the spasmodic use of bullroarers; the sacred ground itself is the uterus of the Mother; a sacred well (*nanggaru*) is dug on the dancing ground; a crescent-shaped trench (*kanala*) is made later; *jelmalandji* "posts" are erected, immense structures symbolizing the Pythons; there is the exchange of wives and gifts, with ceremonial intercourse; and the forked posts, called the *djepalmandji*, are used towards the termination of the rituals. These are features of all Kunapipi, Kalwadi and Kadjari ceremonies.

A word may be said too of the songs that are used in the Yirrkalla-Rose River Kunapipi Cycle.[8] These are mostly of the short conventional type common throughout most of Aboriginal Australia,[9] and their words serve as "key" patterns suggesting and inferring ideas, rather than providing detailed description. This form of song structure is, like the Kunapipi, alien to north-eastern Arnhem Land, where usually songs are very lengthy, description is detailed and repetitious, and separate cycles contain several hundreds of songs (or verses). Secular and magico-religious *tjaruda* love songs, which are often associated incidentally with the sacred Kunapipi (for they are sometimes connected with the Mungamunga), have also found their way up through Rose River to north-east Arnhem Land, and have retained their own song-structure against much local opposition from semi-indigenous forms.[10]

The major theme in all Kunapipi ritual is the natural cycle of reproduction and fertility. Fertility, as expressed in reproduction, seasonal fluctuation, periods of plenty and scarcity, is symbolized in the ceremonies associated with animals, birds and plants, their mating, copulating and bearing offspring in their proper seasons. The essential factor of mating and copulating, as a step towards reproduction, is crystallized in ceremonial copulation on the sacred ground. And ever present, "eternally" watchful and omnipotent, is the Great Mother, the essence of fecundity, in whose divine power rests the strength to animate and increase both human beings and the natural species. The performance of rituals attracts her interest, and brings into motion her protecting influence, which ensures a continuation of the world that her neophytes know, and the unbroken sequence of the seasons upon which they depend for their livelihood.

8. *Vide* Chapters VII and VIII of this work.
9. R. Berndt, A Wonguri-Mandjikai Song Cycle of the Moon Bone, *Oceania*, Vol. XIX, No. 1, pp. 16-50.
10. *Vide* R. Berndt, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land*. In this work a Rose River Love Song Cycle and the *tjaruda* are detailed and discussed.

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All of these were linguistic groups distributed among certain clans.

"Ah, what a lot of languages we talk," said the Li:alauwermiri. "But although our languages are slightly different, we all share the same *mareiin* (*rangga* totemic emblems), and have the same ceremonies."

All the Pythons from the various *dua* groups called out ritually: *'a: ! ko:kjei ! 'a: ! ko:kjei !* And the sound of their voices was like thunder.

Then the Wessel Islands Python asked the Li:alauwermiri Julunggul, "What have you had to eat?"

"I couldn't say", replied Julunggul.

"But you must tell me what you have had," insisted the other. The Li:alauwermiri was *gu'rungkngu* (that is, unwilling to answer correctly), and kept refusing to tell the other Snake. But at last the first Snake said: "I had a rock wallaby and a parrot fish."

"All right, I'll tell you what I had", the female Julunggul replied. "I had two nice little girls and a baby; they are in my body."

The others would not believe. They repeated, "We had a rock wallaby and a parrot fish."

"That is nothing", the Julunggul boasted, "we had those Wauwalak."

Then the Julunggul made a tremendous noise, called *muljulngo* or *du:ldo:n*, now part of the sound of the bullroarer. The two terms are now archaic.

* * * *

It is necessary to pause at this juncture, and comment on some of the aspects dealt with in this part of the myth.

In the first place, there are many versions of the Wauwalak myth, but the most reliable of these are contained in the elaborate song cycles. The above version, which is outlined only briefly and has a number of appendices, differs in several minor points from that set out by Dr. Warner,[5] obtained in the vicinity of Milingimbi. For example, the Wauwalak Sisters in his version had already a child when they reached the outskirts of Muruwul (there termed Mirrirmina), and the younger sister gave birth to a baby on the way; both children were male. It was said that menstrual blood polluted the sacred well; while the Rock Python itself was male, called the Big Father. The flood theme, after the swallowing of the Wauwalak and the conversation of the various *dua* Snakes, makes its appearance in other versions which are not appended here.

The fact that the Rock Python, in the version we outline, is female (called by informants *jindi'ba:pi*, big/snake, and not *jindi'ba:pa*, big father: *ba:pi* and *ba:pa* may perhaps have been confused in Warner's version) is an important point, for it stresses the aspect of

5. L. Warner, *op. cit.* pp. 250-259. Since working at Yirrkalla in 1946-47, the writer has carried out additional research at Milingimbi (1950) into the Wauwalak mythology and songs. Certain local variations are found there, which it is proposed to discuss later in some detail.

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fertility: the female Julunggul is big (as if she were pregnant) from having swallowed the Wauwalak. Aborigines say: "There are two Snakes, both Julunggul. One of these smelt the afterbirth blood and swallowed the Wauwalak: this was the female. The other was her husband, who stopped back in the well". According to another version, both take part in the swallowing.

Nevertheless the female Julunggul, entering the hut in which the Sisters were crouching, symbolizes a penis, and her entry into the hut "is like a penis going into a vagina". The whole process of swallowing is interpreted by natives as an act of coitus. "It is coitus which causes female fecundity, expressed indirectly through the presence of the Wauwalak, as a transmutation of the great Fertility Mother, Djanggawul (mother of the Wauwalak)." The swallowing, accompanied by lightning and rain, serves to bring about the wet season (monsoonal period), the period of growth, and the renewal of animal, bird and vegetable life.

Another important point is the spraying of the Wauwalak by the Julunggul, before swallowing, with a "slippery" salival substance. This saliva is called *ngal*, which is also used for semen (also *ju:tu*, a term used generally for a child): the Julunggul sprays out the *ngal*, like an ejaculation of semen (with her head in the women's hut; that is, "penis in vagina"), and then swallows them (that is, coitus). Now in the *djunggawon* and *kunapipi* rituals, actors are painted with white paint called *ngal* (*buru* or *buluk*), signifying the Julunggul's saliva or semen (*vide* Appendix I).

The erectness of the Julunggul and the other *dua* Pythons is the result of the swallowing (interpreted by informants as an erect penis). It is said that Julunggul and the other Snakes retained their upright positions only "because they had swallowed the Wauwalak and the other meat".

The noise made by Julunggul, after telling the *dua* Snakes she had swallowed the Wauwalak, was (as mentioned) part of the sound of the ritual bullroarer (termed also *julunggul* or *julunggir*, and *mumuna*; this latter is the "outside" secular word used for both the bullroarer and the Snake, called "Lightning Snake". It is also one name of the Kunapipi or Kadjari Mother; this aspect will be mentioned again in Chapters IX to XI). The rest of its sound was obtained from the noise made by Julunggul, when she first sent out lightning which split a tree; the wood from which the bullroarer is made symbolizes a piece of wood that sprang out when the lightning hit the tree. The bullroarer is used principally in the Kunapipi ritual, although also at times in the *ngu:rlmak*; its sound is said to be a "very happy one", for Julunggul has just swallowed the Wauwalak. On the other hand, in the *djunggawon* ritual when the *julunggul* "wooden trumpet" is blown, the "light" sound of *brar ! brar !* signifies the Python's swallowing.

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rain towards the billabong (1). 21 depicts a *gungalung* (big-headed gecko lizard), playing around the Muruwul billabong after the rain; for these lizards always come out at the beginning of the rainy season, "and follow up the Julunggul". 532 773

This is a remarkable drawing of one aspect of sacred mythology in this region; it belongs to a large series dealing with all aspects of religious doctrine in north-eastern Arnhem Land.

This version tells us something of what happened to the Wauwalak after their swallowing. The first version also deals briefly with this aspect, as follows:

After the swallowing, the female Julunggul returned to Muruwul; there she vomited the Wauwalak and child, who were revivified by the bites of the ants, but were eventually re-swallowed. The Wauwalak spirits are still at the sacred well: "we can't see them, although they can see us, for now they belong to Julunggul". When they see human beings coming to this site, the Julunggul swallows them again in their spirit form, "for they are unable to walk about like ordinary people". [776]

The Wauwalak-Julunggul mythology serves to substantiate the Kunapipi rituals: a co-ordinating thread links the various events set out in the story, and these are symbolically expressed in the ceremonies. This myth is distributed among the three rituals already mentioned, the *djunggawon*, *kunapipi* and *ngu:rlmak*; the *ma:ndiwalu* (the *marndiella* ceremony of Warner, *op. cit.* pp. 329–334), localized around the Roper and Rose Rivers, has not yet reached north-east Arnhem Land. Each of them expresses a particular feature of the myth. 773 796 [771]

The Kunapipi, adapted as it is to local traditional needs, has lost none of its symbolism and intent. In conventional Kunapipi mythology one of the principal themes is the Fertility Mother's pregnancy, and her giving birth to "Dreaming" folk: these people she kept in her womb, and "let them out" from time to time to perform sacred ritual. Finally, there is her death, and the totemites' enactment of the returning to and leaving the Mother's womb. The continual birth and rebirth of the totemites symbolize the sequence of the seasons, for Kunapipi had the power to send out the spirits of all the natural species. She was accompanied by the Rainbow Snake, her male counterpart. 773 776 796 [805]

At Yirrkalla, the Fertility Mothers are the Wauwalak: the peculiarly female characteristics of menstruation and afterbirth blood accentuate the concept of procreation. The presence of the Pythons (the male and female Snakes), their ejaculation of saliva (semen), their entry into the *murlk*, and the swallowing, complete the theme. The actual swallowing, said to mean coitus, may also symbolize the "return of the Wauwalak to the uterus of their Mother", as in con- 773 776 831

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773 776 831 ventional interpretation of Kunapipi mythology. The vomiting of the Wauwalak, with their revivification and re-swallowing, and their subsequent swallowing in spirit form, extends the symbolism, and may be compared with the coming and going (birth and rebirth) of the totemites to and from the Mother's uterus.

This interpretation, based on details expressed by aborigines themselves, concerns only the Kunapipi rituals, for other purely indigenous ritual must be interpreted in the light of the Djanggawul mythology, and various extensions of the Wauwalak cycle. However, the basis of Yirrkalla religion rests on the premise of a Fertility Mother, who is an "Eternal" symbol of nature in her abundance. She is accompanied by a Great Snake as a symbol of insemination.

The association of the Snake with a Fertility Mother is fundamental in this doctrine. In recognizing this fact, we must realize that [842] the aborigine of northern Arnhem Land understands the importance of coitus in bringing about conception and birth. And this principle is basic in their thinking.[13]

13. *Vide* L. Warner's interpretation, *op. cit.* pp. 371 *et seq.*

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796 this time are forbidden to women, and relating all the incidents that directly refer to the Wauwalak, for example, the pregnancy of the elder sister, the flow of afterbirth blood, and the menstruation of the young girl.

The *jiritja* snakes call out, and are answered by the women; and nearby the bullroarer is twirled again. Then the dancing men file around the *ngainmara*-covered women, the leader beating his sticks and singing; the young boys are present. The women have brought presents of food, which are handed over to the *jiritja* snakes and their companions.

The dancing men symbolize Julunggul surrounding the women (the Wauwalak in their *murlk*); but these are not swallowed, because none are menstruating or have after-birth blood. "The men dancing around are smelling, but they smell no odour of blood."

796 About this time, visitors from surrounding territories reach the
574 Kunapipi camp; and the foregoing rituals, that serve as introduction to the ceremony as a whole, are completed. Some of them, however, are repeated, both at the sacred ground and at the main camp; important features are the men's dancing around the *ngainmara*-
[431] covered women, and the giving of presents, which are taken back to the ceremonial ground and offered first to Julunggul (for his swallowing) before being eaten.

On the sacred ground the *jiritja* men dig a large hole (*nanggaru* or
796 *nonggaru*, billabong) representing Muruwul; all the animals, birds,
536 and vegetables, in the guise of totemic actors, climb into it and dance, just as did those which "ran away" from the Wauwalak. Two other holes are dug, and in each hole squats a man; one, covered with paperbark, represents the female child of the elder sister, while another actor squats outside the hole as the mother. In the second hole is the younger sister, who is menstruating. The "child" in the hole cries, and the "mother" moves around it; then both the "sisters" leave their positions and dance like the Wauwalak. A number of these totemic animals and so on, particularly the opossum, form pairs (male and female) and enter the *nanggaru* (Muruwul), where they simulate coitus.

A number of actors, representing opossums, dance forward
● [831] around the *nanggaru*; the males have long erect bark penes protruding from their hair-belts. They enact the copulation of these animals.
[881] All these dances are accompanied by singing and beating of sticks, and the young boys going through this ceremony are shown each one and told its significance. On the conclusion of the dancing, every morning and evening, *bukali* (*dua*) or *bukallji* (*jiritja*), depending on the singing, are called by the leader. Men crouch together while the *bukali* "power" names are called in reference to the totemic beings, and at intervals they shout. [These "power" names, being sacred terms (although there are secular power names too) are in the manner

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of invocation.] Most of the actors are smeared thickly with wallaby or kangaroo grease, and then with red-ochre. When they become hot from dancing the grease runs and drips off them, symbolizing the sweat of a pair of totemic animals (or human beings) after coitus. The shining grease is termed *laklak*, which is an alternate name for the younger Wauwalak sister.

When the second new moon appears from the beginning of the Kunapipi, depending, of course, on the proposed length of the ceremony, the men again go out to the sacred ground. Warner (*op. cit.* p. 301) mentions that the Muruwul well (or *nanggaru*) is abandoned at this stage; but in the eastern counterparts witnessed and discussed, it is retained. This appears to depend mainly on the inclination of the Kunapipi leaders, who at Yirrkalla usually take their pattern from Rose River. A large crescent-shaped trench is dug, the *ba'uma* (also called *kanala*, or *kanalara*, the central-western Northern Territory term). This is an extremely important symbol in the Kunapipi. It is usually about ten to twelve feet long, four to five feet deep, and about four feet wide, with earth piled along its concave sides. And it may signify any of the following: the track mark of the female Julunggul; the mark left by her fall, after swallowing the Wauwalak; the crescent-shaped position in which the Wauwalak rested in their *murlk*, before the Snake swallowed them; the clitoris of the Wauwalak; and, its real "inside" meaning, the uterus of the Wauwalak (as a substitute for the Djanggawul Fertility Mothers). Another smaller hole is also dug during some ceremonies; this is called the "younger hole", the uterus of the younger sister, whereas the larger *ba'uma*, also called *da:p* (or *dapi*, foreskin, symbolizing a dilly-bag or uterus), is the uterus of the elder sister. But the principal hole is the *ba'uma*, and is always present in the Kunapipi.

When the *ba'uma* is completed, snake totem actors dance or writhe in the hole. Then two actors, one representing a man and another a woman, dance the "mating dance". The man has an erect bark penis and moves in pursuit of the "woman", who is desirous of coitus: they move towards the trench and dance around it, and at its entrance they simulate sexual intercourse. The Mother is said to be present in the *ba'uma*, and her life-giving powers are made operative by the sexual actions of the two dancers. ("The acting of coitus by the totemites is like the uterus being fertilized": the Mother is having sexual intercourse, so that she may produce.)

Various other dances are held in the *ba'uma*, at which the young initiates are present; the majority are related to coitus. There is, for example, the *darl:t* dance. Two men, representing male and female wagtails, sit opposite each other in the trench with legs folded beneath them; their knees touch, and in the dancing they simulate coitus. There is also the *moilt'manina* (*moilt* being an alternate name for Julunggul) dance, of the male and female Julunggul Rock

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796 535 831 Pythons. One sits on the thighs of the other in the trench, and they have "coitus". These ceremonies are spread over a number of days, often with a certain amount of repetition.

796 778 [616] In the meantime, the *jiritja* men have been making the *jelmalandji* emblems. It is said that "the *jiritja* have got a *dua* job", and they hunt all the *dua* away from the special place near the sacred ground where the manufacture is in progress. This "giving the job" to the *jiritja* is termed *ir'wondji* or *maralwa*. They must be paid with food, clothing, tobacco and indigenous objects, not on the sacred ground but in the main camp. The *jelmalandji* are twelve to twenty feet in length, and about two and a half feet wide at the centre. They are formed with a solid pole, around which pads of grass and paperbark (and in these days blankets and bagging) are tied with native fibres. The outer covering of bark is then smeared with arm blood and red-ochre, on to which is fastened birds' down or wild cotton so that a meandering pattern is formed, symbolizing Julunggul. At the apex of the "post" [301] is a bunch of cockatoo feathers "like a man wears in his hair". Both *jelmalandji*, one larger than the other, have similar designs. But although one represents Julunggul, the other is said to be the "cabbage" or "wild coconut" (*gulwiri*) palm, which was standing near the Wauwalak's hut, or at the palm-tree swamp from which the blood was washed down to the sacred well (or billabong). Aborigines [773] explain, "they made the Snake out of that tree", meaning either that the first *jelmalandji* was constructed from the palm tree, or that the Snake itself was derived from it. The latter is probably correct, for this "wild coconut" palm is said to be the spirit of Julunggul: "their spirits were standing in the shape of palm trees near Muruwul, when the Julunggul emerged from the well to swallow the Wauwalak".

796 237 301 616 [783] While the *jiritja* are making the *jelmalandji*, the *dua* prepare the feather down for body decoration: this has come from the *jiritja*, who are paid for it. It is the *dua* who play the most important part in the ceremonial dancing; and while the final touches are being put to the *jelmalandji*, the *dua* actors decorate themselves, sticking on the feathers with arm blood. When everything is ready, the two moiety groups meet each other, and rub sweat over one anothers' eyes;[6] after this, each group may see what the other has done. The *jiritja* examine the body designs of the *dua*, and the latter may observe the *jelmalandji*.

6. That is, the *jiritja* rub sweat from their armpits over the eyes of the *dua*, and *vice versa*. This process is carried out when new *rungga* objects or *murella* ceremonies are seen for the first time, or when novices or visitors are observing sacred dancing or ceremonial emblems (objects, body or bark paintings, and so on). It means that their eyes may now be opened, they can now see "with sacredness". "The old people have to do this to us before we can see"; for, as one informant explained, "it is like moving over some of the old Law to the youngest (younger generation), and we get trouble if we look straight away". It is called *bunegan'miriamma*.

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. . ." — (Djanggawul and Wauwalak mythology). In any case, a cult such as the Kunapipi, which stresses fertility and reproduction, could not exclude women; as is normal in these matters, a certain sphere of ceremonial activity is allotted to each sex, while the women realize the important part played by their divine counterpart, the Wauwalak. 562 796 794

In the Kunapipi, however, women enter the sacred ground of the men; this is a feature that rarely occurs in the ceremonies associated with other cults. Upon entering the ground, the women themselves become more definitely *marelin* (sacred); "they take over from the men, and dance before them as if the men were only novices being introduced to their first sacred rituals". They re-enact something of what they themselves initially possessed in the mythological period, and what was stolen by the men. They use the sacred symbol of Julunggul, and the tree that was split by his lightning, and through their actions they represent the origin of the men's sacred bullroarer which no woman is supposed to see. They dance the ritual of the great Python, "and the men hang their heads in fear".[17]

On the termination of this ceremony, the women dance the lewd bandicoot dance on the sacred ground before the men, expressing symbolically the basic intent of the Kunapipi. They are stimulating both themselves and the men in order to carry out sexual intercourse, for copulation is the means by which fertility is achieved.

This brings us to an aspect that cannot be considered in detail here; that is, the problem of religious sexuality.[18] By this we mean the degree in which sex, as a stimulatory factor, enters into Kunapipi ritual. In most sacred aboriginal cult life, where sexual subjects are dealt with frankly and freely, there is no suggestion of actual individual stimulation, or of arousing the sexual inclinations of the participants: the ritual merely re-enacts some specific aspect of mythology which is related to erotic activity or coitus, and which is necessary for its effective completion, and for achieving the desired intent. The actors only carry out the symbolism associated with sexual activity. The arousing of sexual desire by sacred acting of this type would project into it a profane and irreligious content that would immediately detract from its real intent. Allowance for sexual stimulation by dancing, acting and singing has been made in the case of love magic ritual, or of collective male and female secular ceremonies that heighten sexual feelings and permit licence. 794 796 831 [832] [786]

17. This ceremony held by the women is similar to their secret magico-religious rituals in central-western Northern Territory. It is one aspect of the *tjaruka*, which has its sacred and secular expressions. From these secret rituals of the women, men are traditionally, and in present practice, excluded. *Vide* C. H. Berndt, *Women's Changing Ceremonies in Northern Australia*, L'Homme, Cahiers d'Ethnologie, de Geographie et de Linguistique, 1, Paris, 1950, pp. 1-85, text figs. See particularly Chapter V. [184] [113]
18. *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Section XII.

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intervals, until we entered the sacred ground where the *nanggaru*, the *kanala*, and one *jelmalandji* were ready.

"One *kakawar* stood (at *a*, in the accompanying sketch figure, 10) outside the *nanggaru* billabong, and the other (at *b*) outside the *kanala* "river"; and they called out. I stood (at *c*) beside the *kanala*. We then rested, while the two *kakawar* made the human-hair cord for the bullroarer (*d*); then one of these men (at *a*) covered his face with leaves, all hanging down from his headband.

"We called out again, and looked over towards the *jelmalandji*, standing upright alongside the *kanala*. From out of its bunch of emu feathers, we saw smoke rising: billows of smoke (*e*) coming from the top of the *jelmalandji*, but no fire. We took hold of the *jelmalandji* and placed it in the *kanala* 'river', which is really the Wauwalak's vagina. We put it in the trench, lying down, like a big penis. Then we danced around the *kanala*, 'taking' opossum dancing, pushing in the mound until the *jelmalandji* was buried and the *kanala* covered.

"After resting, the two *kakawar* men got the bullroarer, which had been left in the *nanggaru*; they attached the cord to a stick, wound it up, and swung it, and there was a big noise. All the women in the main camp answered it; and other men appeared, and erected a *djepalmandji* between the sacred ground and the main camp. The three of us came down towards it, and saw all the young boys hidden under the framework, and the women sitting in a bunch covered with blankets. And as I looked, I awoke".

Gumuk mentioned that he had this Kunapipi dream because he was worrying about getting some tobacco to smoke. He was worrying and thinking about this, and dropped off to sleep and dreamt this dream.

As in the last two dreams, the incidents mentioned refer to actual Kunapipi ritual. Gumuk did not try to interpret the smoking *jelmalandji*; but it seems most likely that his desire for tobacco, in order to smoke before sleeping, has been thus projected into the dream. It is not unusual for a secular activity of this kind to appear in dreams devoted mainly to sacred subjects. On the sacred ground itself, tobacco is considered *mareiin* (sacred) and may be smoked only by the Kunapipi headman (or other ceremonial leader) and the elders, although others may step outside the ground and enjoy a smoke in the normal way. In view of this, it does not seem necessary to search for an esoteric reason for the smoking *jelmalandji*; it is possible, too, in a ritualistic sense, for Gumuk to identify himself with the *jelmalandji* (irrespective of the sex of the Julunggul).

Gumuk reiterated his view that the *kanala*, a "river", is really the Wauwalak's vagina. The *jelmalandji* symbolizes the penis, which is removed from its upright position and placed in the *kanala* "like a big penis", just as happens in coitus. The opossum dancing around the *kanala* is, as has been mentioned, concerned with simulation of

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159 the sexual act, while the covering of the *kanalu* and the *jelmalandji*
787 signifies the complete insertion of the penis. This, of course, conforms
796 to what is believed to be the underlying intent of the Kunapipi
[83] ritual and the Wauwalak mythology; through fertilization by the penis (symbolized by the Snake), the Wauwalak (representing the Fertility Mother) becomes the source of fecundity for human, animal and other species.

The last phase of the dream refers to the final Kunapipi ceremony, in which the *djepalmandji* is used. This rite, signifying rebirth, is a normal outcome of the above ceremony; for from the symbolic act of coitus "someone or something will be born", and in the Kunapipi it is the initiates who emerge from their experience like new people.

* * * *

159 These three dreams serve to amplify our discussion of Kunapipi
787 ritual, and stress its inter-relationship with the basic Wauwalak
121 theme. Some new features are introduced, such as the re-interpretation of the *kanala* and *nanggaru*; but this does not fundamentally alter the conventional intent of Kunapipi ceremonies.

There is possibly a recognized pattern in Kunapipi dreams, over and above descriptive details of its rituals, which may be modified or exaggerated according to individual inclination or personal response. Definite patterns are found in dreams relating to other aspects of Wauwalak mythology or Djanggawul ritual, or to matters of alien contact. Much field work however has yet to be done in the realm of psychological reaction to indigenous (and introduced) religious phenomena.

[pp. 85-203 not processed]

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177 794 797 Kunapipi performances has served to strengthen native belief in its efficacy; but this tendency will last only as long as do the members of "the older generation".

[831] By the driving underground, so to speak, of the Kunapipi, its sexual element has become considerably accentuated. In some cases, ritual copulation has lost a certain proportion of its sacred aura and serves as an excuse for promiscuity. This aspect is particularly apparent in contact areas where detribalization has taken place, and intensive cultural disintegration has resulted.

177 794 778 648 For example, on war-time Army Settlements during 1944–46 the performance of the Kunapipi (or "Big Sunday", as it was called) was forbidden by Civil and Army authorities alike, on the grounds that the big religious ceremonies entailed interruption of normal work. As a result of this prohibition very few of the sacred ceremonies were carried out, although a number were performed surreptitiously some distance from the Settlements, and were consequently of brief duration. One development of this external control was the accentuation of sexual promiscuity through the medium of the "Big Sunday", and the indiscriminate use of sacred tabus for the materialistic ends of a minority. In the latter case, food, clothing, and other goods were sometimes declared sacred, and could in this way be taken over by the person or the group pronouncing the tabu.

Whole areas of the settlement would, unknown to the womenfolk, be declared ritually sacred to men: latrines, washing-sheds, camps, roads and so on were pronounced tabu-ed to women. A woman inadvertently entering the demarcated area would be threatened with [831] punishment, which she could avert through payment of goods or sexual favours: usually, of course, she preferred to "pay" with coitus.

This practice reached such proportions that Settlement officers endeavoured strongly to oppose it, and cited it as an additional reason for prohibiting the Kunapipi ceremonies; nevertheless the habit persisted, and seems to have aroused interest and enjoyment among both men and women. On the Daly River, west of Darwin, a rather similar practice has become institutionalized, in attempts to reinforce a religious life which is fast disappearing because of the disrupting effects of local European contact over a comparatively long period. Other examples, too, could be brought forward to confirm this particular distortion of "Big Sunday" religion.

But these features are abnormal; they have been brought about by circumstances beyond the control of the natives themselves, and represent merely one unpleasant result of uncontrolled or badly planned contact between two widely differing cultures. They would not normally appear, for they are not a part of indigenous religious life.

177 794 We might well ask what is the future of a cult like the Kunapipi.

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APPENDIX I

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794 In the main body of this work some mention has been made of
796 ceremonial copulation during the performance of the Kunapipi.
Our examples were taken principally from north-eastern and south-
●831 ern Arnhem Land, with reference to the Roper River region; and
for comparison with these the following data from western Arnhem
Land are presented.

During our field work in the western Arnhem Land region, at the Goulburn Islands and Oenpelli, little reference was made to the Kunapipi ceremonies;[1] it was said that these were introduced by
[177] Reinbaranga people from the south and south-east, in the direction of the Roper River, or that they came from the Milingimbi area to the east.

Recently, however, the writer's chief informant at South Goulburn
[115] Island, a Maung man named Small Ngolaman (or Nangolominj), who is incidentally one of the very few literate aborigines on the north coast of the Northern Territory, and who has been "keeping track" of certain problems in the region during our absence, writes that the Kunapipi is known to some of the mainland men who visit Goulburn Island. The Kunapipi, as we are already aware, is carried out in the vicinity of Oenpelli, and in the upper Liverpool River area, under the auspices of Reinbaranga or Milingimbi leaders, and is known (but not practised) at Goulburn Island.

Small Ngolaman's preliminary statement[2] reveals some very interesting features; for example, the use of one girl on the sacred ground needs more accompanying data, since it bears a striking similarity to the more western type, as carried out by the old Laraki:a tribe; this will however be dealt with later. Ngolaman's informant
[115] was a Maung man, named Inmindjur.

"Messengers are sent out, notifying the various groups that the
[203] Kunapipi is to be held. When the people come in to the ceremonial camp, the rituals begin. The Kunapipi headman chooses a young
794 girl, and takes her away from the main camp to the sacred ground.
796 She is placed in a big bough shade or hut, recently built by the young initiated men; she lies there on her back. Two holes are dug, one on
831 each side of her; a strong post is placed in each, and rammed

1. *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Section IX.
2. *Correspondence* to R. Berndt, October 4th, 1948.

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right down. The girl's legs are tied to the posts, so that her legs are outstretched between them. (We know of no other reference to the actual tying down of the Kunapipi girl who has been chosen for ceremonial coitus. As a young girl is specified, this probably refers to ritual defloration which has been mentioned briefly elsewhere—*vide* Chapters IV, V and X. It suggests also that force is used to hold the girl, a feature which should not normally accompany this rite; moreover, promiscuity is such a feature of this area, with the breaking down of indigenous regulations governing sexual conduct, that one would not expect it to be necessary.)

The men then paint themselves, and line up for dancing. There may be two or three hundred men on the sacred ground. The headman begins to beat his clapping sticks, while the dancing men clap their hands rhythmically to the music and song, and call out intermittently. Then the first man, at the head of the long line of dancing men, leaves the line and goes into the shade and copulates with the Kunapipi girl; the other men continue clapping their hands and calling out.

Under the girl, immediately beneath her vulva, a small depression has been dug and in it has been placed a shallow paperbark dish; this catches the semen and vaginal juices that come out of the girl.

When the first man has left the hut, another takes his place; this is continued until all the men in the line have entered the hut and copulated, and their semen has flowed from the girl into the paperbark container.

By this time, the container is full; and after a rest, the men remove it from the hut and begin to paint themselves with the semen; then they continue their dancing, which goes on from early morning until sunset. Ceremonial coitus takes place each day for several weeks, different girls being chosen for each ceremony." Other rituals relating to the Kunapipi are also performed in a sequence similar to that already discussed.

It should be mentioned that the reason given for thus decorating the postulants' bodies with designs in semen and vaginal juices is the belief in the fructifying potency of the former. The act of ceremonial coitus is itself symbolic of fertilization, and the subsequent increase of human and the natural species; semen is the essence which causes pregnancy; and this natural and logical belief is an integral part of the rituals of the Kunapipi fertility cult.

There is also an association between semen and the saliva of the Julunggul Snake (*vide* Chapter III, *et seq.*); it was with this substance that Julunggul smeared the Wauwalak and the child prior to swallowing. This "saliva" is represented by white pipe-clay in parts of the Kunapipi, and it is with this that Kunapipi neophytes are painted.

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Chapter One

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DJANGGAWUL

DJANGGAWUL, used collectively, is a name given to three Ancestral Beings; alternatively, it may be Djangga or Djangg'gau. Usually it refers to two Sisters and a Brother, although in the Milingimbi version the latter is not mentioned.[1] In north-eastern Arnhem Land, as in the version presented in this volume, the Brother and his two Sisters are always represented. The Brother, known by himself as Djanggawul, is also called, less frequently, Ganjudingu.[2] His 'inside'[3] name is Gundanguru, which means the 'nail' or spike of a 'nail' fish; an alternative 'inside' name is Balwadjar, which has a similar meaning. The elder Sister is Bildjiwuraroiju (or Bildjiwuraru), a name derived from the sacred term *duldjijuldji*, meaning the point of the sacred *mamurulan ranggi* emblem.[4] She has the alternative names of Reiwurjun, meaning, 'getting tired (after long paddling)', and referring to the Djanggawul's paddling from Bralgu to the Australian mainland; and of Ganinjara, which means also the point of the *mamurulan* (its point enters her vagina, for the *mamurulan* is a symbolic penis).

[1] The presence of the Djanggawul Brother is not mentioned by L. Warner, *op. cit.*, pp. 333-40.

[2] The Milingimbi version calls the elder Sister Djanggawul (said to be a derivation of the name Gurulgurul, belonging to a *wongar* Dreaming man at Bralgu); the younger Sister is said to be called Ganjudingu (meaning the fin of the barramundi fish). Collectively they were also called Maijilwara, which is a 'big' name.

[3] The use of 'inside' terms is confined to sacred songs; they may also be called on the sacred ground during ritual. Normally, they are used only by men fully acquainted with the relevant ideology, and very rarely in ordinary conversation.

[4] Also said to mean 'a long clitoris dragging'.

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The younger Sister is usually called Miralaidj, Malalait or Mandalaidj, which means the 'younger' green-backed turtle called *dhirul*. She is also called Djurdjunga, 'clouds coming up', or Balmabalma, which means a 'sacred shade' used on the ritual *nara* ground; this latter has the 'inside' name Mal'marangu.

In the north-eastern Arnhem Land version these three are accompanied by Bralbral (or Barabara), who stands in relationship to them as *wuridj* or *muri*, a mother's mother's brother's son's son. He has no other name, and appears only at the beginning of the myth and the song cycle.

Although these three principal Ancestral Beings are brother and sisters, one version of this story tells that the Brother Djanggawul had in the beginning only one Sister, Bildjiwuraroiju and that it was through his incestuous intercourse with her that Miralaidj was born. Miralaidj did not, however, call Bildjiwuraroiju and her brother mother and father: instead she called them respectively elder sister and brother. That is, 'one Sister came out from the big Sister; and this younger one called the other one sister because she came out first, long before Bildjiwuraroiju gave birth to the children who are said to be the direct ancestors of the Aborigines living to-day'. But Djanggawul had coitus with the younger Sister who actually, according to this version, is his own daughter. This incestuous behaviour is nothing unusual, for in the myth the Brother often has coitus with his two Sisters. To all intents and purposes, Bildjiwuraroiju and Miralaidj are treated as Sisters.

These Beings came from a far distant country, and on the way to the Arnhem Land mainland stopped at Bralgu, the *dua* moiety island of the dead. Bralgu is a mythical place, but some native informants say that it may perhaps be an island near Mornington (one of the Wellesley Islands in the Gulf of Carpentaria), or alternatively an island off the Cape York Peninsula.[1] To-day its geographical position remains unclarified, and it is still the Home of the Eternal Spirits, the spirits of departed ancestors as well as of those Beings who were there when the Djanggawul themselves visited the island. It is said, too, that the Djanggawul possessed at that time a far greater number of sacred objects, but because they had only a bark canoe to get to the Australian mainland they were obliged to leave many behind.

The ultimate origin of the Djanggawul is now shrouded in antiquity, and it is fruitless to hypothesize. They are said, however, to be closely associated with the Sun. One myth tells that the Sun,

[1] Or, at Milingimbi, said to be near Mapoon Mission station off Cape York Peninsula. This place was suggested by informants who were attempting to place Bralgu in relation to some known site, indicating that it was somewhere in that direction.

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a woman, possessed two daughters who were later to become the Djanggawul Sisters. But while the Yirrkalla myth and song cycle do not refer directly to them as Sun daughters, many symbolic references are made to the sun and to its warmth; in fact, the whole concept of the myth, with the growth of human beings and trees, and so on, depends on the presence of the Sun, through the agency of the Two Sisters. In the Milingimbi version this aspect is treated in great detail, if somewhat symbolically; one is left in no doubt as to who the two Sisters really were, and their affinity with the Sun. For example, the feathered strings from the *lindaridj* parakeet which they carried were symbolic of the sun's rays; they travelled from east to west, as the sun itself travels, and from their vulvae the sun's rays spread, while to-day one name for the disc of the midday sun is *dagu*, *gaubai* or *dala*, meaning the Djanggawul Sisters' vulvae or vaginae. [831]

There is little doubt, then, that the Sisters, if not the Brother, are projections of the Sun. If they are not Sun Goddesses themselves, they are closely linked with the Sun. The question of whether or not it is legitimate to describe certain Aboriginal Ancestral Beings as gods and goddesses raises, of course, a number of problems. Nevertheless, these particular Ancestral Beings are themselves divine in that they possess creative abilities, and are sacred in the full sense of the word. From this point of view, the appellation 'god' or 'goddess' is in order; but by using it we do not in any way imply that these Aboriginal Ancestral Beings, or the sacred emblems they brought with them, are worshipped in the Christian sense. The concept of 'worshipping' is far removed from conventional Aboriginal religious thought: things or Beings are held in reverence, or even in awe, but never worshipped in the way that we understand the term. Our choice of a title for these Beings, however, endowed as they are with all the attributes which go to form the idea of Godhead, is primarily a matter of terminology. [782]

These Beings brought with them to the Arnhem Land coast a variety of sacred emblems, which are material symbols of their cult. First and foremost was the *ngainmara* mat, alternatively called *mararumgul*, *dalwuldalwul* or *wagulwagul*; the latter term applies particularly to the mat's 'mouth' or opening. *Ngainmara* is a secular term, with *mania* as another alternative. This mat is the symbolic uterus of either Sister, but it may also mean the whale, or simply a mat. Its attributes were so sacred, representing as it did the Uteri of the Djanggawul, that it is no longer endowed with ritual value; it has passed generally into the society, and is used primarily by women. That is to say, its sacredness was of such intensity that it could not be kept for use in ceremonies alone, but became an [831]

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article of everyday use. Moreover, since it is symbolically associated with females, their use of it is not incongruous. The mat, conically shaped, is plaited from split and dried pandanus fibre, and usually has a fringe symbolizing the Sisters' pubic hair. Adult women and children still shelter under such mats from time to time. A child, for instance, may curl up asleep beneath one, completely hidden from view; and then he, or she, may be likened to the sacred *rangga* emblems which in the mythological period were kept within the mat.

The Djanggawul brought with them, too, a dilly bag woven from pandanus fibre interlaced with red breast-feathers of the parakeet, with feathered pendants attached. This is the sacred dilly bag or spirit bag called *jelagandja*, or *mundaidjngu*. It is sacred because it is worn by men during certain ceremonies, particularly the *dua nara*, and contains part of their spirit self; for this bag is also a symbol of the uterus, from which (or, alternatively, from the *ngainmara*) men and women came forth in the beginning. Waxed knobs fastened at intervals along the feathered string may contain foreskins, said to be an allusion to fertility. These bags, although highly sacred, are not kept on the ritual ground, nor are they regarded as secret. Worn by men in the camp, they are seen by all, and women too may use them at times. In fact, their making is often entrusted to women, who in the Milingimbi area also prepare the beautiful feathered string (although in the north-eastern area this particular variety is made by men). It is only when the bag is almost finished that it is passed over to the men, who ritually, to the accompaniment of sacred invocation and singing, cut the loose fringe (the pubic hair or, alternatively, the clitorises of the Two Sisters)[1] and attach the red feathered pendants (the rays of the sun from the Djanggawul). The bag is then returned to the women, who complete the edging and attach the handle of jungle twine. The men who have cut the fringe, because they belong to *dua* moiety groups responsible for the *nara* Djanggawul rituals, are termed 'the Children of the Djanggawul'—like the children who came in the beginning from the sacred uteri of the Sisters (*vide* the myth and the songs).

The Djanggawul also carried with them sacred poles, known as *rangga*. These poles are very sacred; they are used only on the ritual ground, and are seen only by fully initiated men or by neophytes. Women, however, know of their existence and can describe their shape and decoration, and discuss their meaning.

[1] The basic symbolism of this, as an umbilical cord, will be discussed later in this volume.

Significance of the Djanggawul

There seem to have been, originally, several basic types: the *djuda*, or tree *rangga*, from which trees sprang up when the *rangga* was plunged into the ground by the Djanggawul; the *manwulan*, or stick used by the Djanggawul Brother as a 'walking stick', which he plunged into the ground so that spring water gushed forth; the *ganinjari*, 'yam' or walking stick (sometimes confused with the *manwulan*), carried by the Sisters, and used for obtaining water in the same way;[1] and the *djanda*, or tail of the goanna, with the same function as the *manwulan*, derived from the goanna seen by the Djanggawul on arrival at Jelangbara, Port Bradshaw.

These original forms have been elaborated into a variety of *rangga* emblems. They include various poles or objects of totemic *wongar* origin, related directly or indirectly to the Djanggawul; *rangga* symbolizing vulva or vagina, penis or testes; stone *rangga*, derived from a stone which was removed from the vagina of the younger Sister; and conventionalized representations of the Djanggawul themselves, for example, the *wirlgul* (younger Sister) *rangga* or the *gungwan* (elder Sister) *rangga*. All of these are decorated with clan patterns derived from those originally given by the Djanggawul[2] to the 'new generation' which emerged from the Sisters' uteri; and most have attached to them feathered string—the red parakeet feathers symbolizing the rays of the sun, the red sky at sunset, or blood from the Sisters. They are used in dancing on the sacred ground, and in posturing before the sacred shade or hut; the latter symbolizes the uterus or *ngainmara* mat, and in it *rangga* are stored just as were the first *rangga* in the beginning. Parakeet feathered string was also among the objects brought by the Djanggawul.

All these objects, then, have symbolic significance, and relate to the basic theme of Djanggawul ritual and mythology. This theme is fertility, manifested in the perpetually pregnant Women, the Two Sisters, in the growth of trees and foliage, in the creation of running springs, and in the abiding and life-giving warmth of the sun's rays. It reflects the Aborigines' fundamental reliance on the products of their natural environment, and their emphasis on the procreation of human and animal life, the continuance of their own species and of the food which supplies them with sustenance. They see the theme of fertility mirrored in their surroundings, and in the rhythmic sequence of the seasons, and recognize their own dependence on these and on other natural phenomena for their very being.

[1] The two Sisters are also said to have urinated in various places, making sometimes small streams, and sometimes pools or wells: in the latter case, the well itself is often likened to their vaginae.

[2] *Vide* A. P. Elkin, R. and C. Berndt, *Art in Arnhem Land*, pp. 28–41.

Significance of the Djanggawul

These material objects, then, such as the sacred *rangga*, bag and mat, are focal points, or symbols, through which we may grasp the significance of the concept as a whole. The mat is a uterus symbol; so is the whale, although used in this sense only incidentally. Here is the source of all life, for it was from the Uteri of the Sisters that the first people sprang. Moreover, these Aborigines have recognized the importance of the sexual act in causing conception and pregnancy. This natural sequence of events has many parallels in the animal life they observe about them. Throughout the myth direct references are made to sexual intercourse, while symbolic references in both the myth and songs are numerous. The *rangga* poles, the yam stick, *mamwulan*, *djuda* and *djanda* are themselves penis symbols, an interpretation made quite frankly by the Aborigines themselves. The poles, for instance, are kept hidden within the *ngainmara*, and removed from time to time for drying, thus symbolizing coitus (penis in vagina as a projection of the uterus), and drying the penis after intercourse when it has become 'wet' with semen and vaginal juices. Or the *mamwulan* is plunged into the earth, so that water gushes forth at its removal; this is compared to coitus, the removal of the penis from the vagina, and the subsequent flow of seminal and vaginal juices when the Sisters stand up again. Waterholes themselves are vulva symbols, used frequently in Aboriginal song and mythology, while trees (for example, the *djuda*) are penis symbols, and their roots are called by the term used for penis (*vide* songs). A great deal of this erotic symbolism is expressed in sacred ritual, in posturing and actions.

From this we see something of the importance of sexual intercourse. To the Aborigines, as to us, sex and food are basic drives. Whatever subsidiary drives exist, these two are fundamental, for upon them human life, as they know it, depends. The Aborigines are apt to stress the importance of the sexual drive. 'How else', they say, 'can we continue as a group? By what other means can we obtain food except by its natural increase?' Thus even certain forms of plant life are divided into male and female sexes. Sexual intercourse is felt to be necessary for survival, in so far as the human and animal world is concerned, although this survival depends ultimately on forces beyond the Aborigines' control—on seasonal fluctuation, and on the sun, and so we come back to the significance underlying the Djanggawul. The Aborigines of north-eastern and north-central Arnhem Land consequently pay much attention to sexual matters, and their attitude towards this subject is one of utmost frankness.[1] To them, sexual intercourse is an essential

[1] *Vide* Introduction to *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land* (R. and C. Berndt), Viking Fund Series in Anthropology, Yale University, 1951. No 16.

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preliminary to pregnancy. Children in this area, for instance, are called *judu* (*jutu*, usually employed in a singular sense), or *djamarguli* (plural). The former word means 'semen'; that is, the child originated from the semen. The latter means 'through (or from) work'; to 'work' (*djama*) a female is to have coitus, and *djamarguli* is literally the 'result of working (or coitus)'.

Erotic references, then, in the Djanggawul cult merely conform to the accepted pattern. To say that the Aborigine is concerned unduly with the subject of sex, and derives a morbid satisfaction from constant direct or symbolic reference to it, it to distort the actual position. He is frankly interested in the workings of the human body, and in the satisfaction of its basic needs; and he recognizes the fundamental importance of the act, not only in ensuring the continuation of life, but also in helping to stabilize relations between members of both sexes, through their very interdependence. It is not unexpected, therefore, to find manifestations of this interest in Aboriginal religious emblems and mythology, ritual and song. Indeed, what more obvious means of expression could a simple group of people have? Here, in the Djanggawul doctrine, are crystallized their hopes and desires, related to their fundamental drives, co-ordinated with the natural resources and phenomena and with the environment which they know.

Numerous references are made to the removal of the *rangga* from the *ngainmara*, a symbolic allusion also to the removal of children from the wombs of the Sisters: for *rangga* are likened to children, or human beings, and men and women may use this term to refer to their bones. The spiritual content of the bones is the same as that of the sacred *rangga*, and has, moreover, been passed on from their ancestors—those who were originally removed from the Sisters. When, for example, postulants enter the sacred hut (= *ngainmara* = uterus) on the ritual ground, they are like *rangga* being hidden away within the *ngainmara*. In a polygynous marriage, too, the wives are said to be like *rangga*: their husband has collected them into a group, and has a monopoly over them as a man has over his individual *rangga*. This likening of women to sacred *rangga* is interesting, but probably derives from the fact that women themselves are said to be the source of ritual knowledge,[1] and consequently sacred.

There is much stress, too, on the maternal qualities of the Djanggawul Sisters, although the Brother himself is of considerable importance. The Two Sisters are mentioned far more frequently, particularly in the Milingimbi version of the cycle, although this

[1] *Vide* Chapters 2 and 3. (See also M. Mead, *Male and Female*, London, 1950, pp. 102–3.)

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Significance of the Djanggawul

831 776 is a predominantly patrilineal society. The Two Sisters are Original Mothers of the various *dua* moiety clansfolk, as well as of the *jiritja*. They are Mother Goddesses in the true sense of the term, for although they were allegedly instrumental in populating the greater part of eastern Arnhem Land, they are responsible also for all subsequent fertility. Aborigines call the Sisters 'Our Mothers'. When men cut the fringe of their sacred dilly bags, or perform ritual, they are the 'Sons of the Djanggawul'; when they enter the sacred ground, marked out in a special way, they are returning to their Mothers' uteri; when they enter the sacred hut on the ritual ground, they are also returning to their Mothers' uteri (or uterus, when one hut is used, referring to the elder Sister). The same theme is expressed symbolically in a variety of ways. The whole concept of the return to the Mother on ritual occasions is particularly interesting;[1] but we shall not digress to discuss the theoretical interpretation, as favoured by some modern psychoanalytic schools of thought.

113 532 831 776 The most important focal point of interest in the Djanggawul myth and songs is procreation, and its ramifications. In some drawings from Yirrkalla the Two Sisters are depicted with people (or children) 'flowing' out from their vulvae. Their legs are apart and flexed, their eyes open with tears running from the pain of childbirth. This concept of people flowing from the Mothers' uteri is used in western-central Northern Territory in reference to the Kunapipi Mother,[2] who is also said to 'let postulants out from her womb during ceremonial time'. (This same theme is expressed, both symbolically and directly, at Yirrkalla and Millingimbi.) The relationship between the Djanggawul and the Kunapipi Mother is an interesting question, which unfortunately cannot be treated here.[3]

831 776 The Djanggawul were possessed of abnormally long genitalia. The Brother had an elongated penis, emphasizing, through exaggeration, his masculine function in the fertility scheme. The Two Sisters had abnormally long clitorises,[4] a feature more difficult to explain. The Aborigines themselves offer no explanation, except that the *rangga* may have been derived from them. For example, when the penis and clitorises were eventually foreshortened, the

[1] *Vide* R. Berndt, *Kunapipi*.

[2] *Vide* R. Berndt, *op. cit.*, Chapters II–IV, IX, and R. and C. Berndt, 'The Eternal Ones of the Dream' (being a discussion of Dr. G. Roheim's book of that name), *Oceania*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, pp. 67–78, three plates.

[3] Some mention has been made of this in *Kunapipi*, Chapters I *e* and III.

[4] *Vide* Chapters 2 and 3. The significance of the Sisters' clitorises is revealed in the songs.

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severed parts became *rangga* or feathered strings, which are also regarded as *rangga*. An interesting interpretation was made by one informant, himself a ceremonial leader. Within historic times, he said, a certain man was born with both vagina and penis, and with breasts like a woman; he was bi-sexual and produced a child, after which he died. Commenting on this example, which was told to him by a grandparent, the informant suggested that these Djanggawul Sisters may have originally been bi-sexual, so that their clitorises were actually penes which they used to impregnate themselves by inserting into the vagina; for the 'clitoris-penes' were sufficiently long to curve round and use for coitus. The same informant stated that the Djanggawul Brother may possibly have been introduced later. This is, however, the tentative interpretation of one man, and does not represent group opinion.

The presence of elongated clitorises can possibly be explained in terms of the tendency to accentuate a female organ (as has been done in the case of the male); or they may, symbolically, represent the umbilical cord (as in the Song Cycle). The former explanation seems to be more probable, for much stress is placed on the erectness of a woman's clitoris during coitus,[1] while the clitorises of many Aboriginal women are fairly well developed; they are played with and handled by women from pre-adolescent days, in an endeavour to increase their size, so attracting the attentions of men and heightening their sexual satisfaction. In other drawings from the Yirrkalla area, the Djanggawul Sisters have long clitorises, dragging on the ground. In one illustration we see the Two Sisters with elongated clitorises, and the Brother with his long penis; they are holding *rangga*, and people are coming out to be placed on a *ngainmara* mat. The same drawing shows the Wauwalak Sisters,[2] who are the daughters of the Djanggawul, while the Brother puts his hand into the Sisters' wombs to remove the people. The Brother's inserting his hand into the uteri, to remove the people (children), is compared with his putting his hand into the *ngainmara* to remove the sacred *rangga*. Further, it suggests that the Sisters did not invariably give birth to such people in the normal way. The Brother's action in inserting his hand merely accentuates the theme by introducing a further point, which can be more easily represented in symbolism—that is, by the *rangga* and *ngainmara*, illustrating the phenomenon of childbirth.

Professor Lloyd Warner was the first to note the presence of the Djanggawul (which he called Djunkgao) cult, presenting this

[1] *Vide* R. Berndt, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land*, for publication.

[2] The Wauwalak Sisters sponsor all *Kunapipi*, *ngurlmag* and *djunggawon* ritual. *Vide* R. Berndt, *Kunapipi*, Chapters I *e*, III and IV.

Significance of the Djanggawul

coming of the heavy rains of the wet season, which is viewed as a period of fertilization.[1]

b. The first ceremonies which take place after the arrival of the visitors are related mainly to totemic species, and do not usually involve use of the *rangga* emblems, which are nearly always retained till later ceremonies. Older men organize all these rituals and instruct neophytes. When actors are not carrying out the traditional actions with sufficient skill, they often take over themselves to demonstrate just how it should be done. Both *dua* and *jiritja* neophytes are present. There is also a ceremonial shaving of facial hair; older men leave short tufts or beards that symbolically represent the fringe of the *ngainmara* mat (= pubic hair of the Sisters), and attach red parakeet feathers, like the *rangga* pendant strings. (That is, as the *rangga* have feathered pendants attached to them, so also do men, because they approximate *rangga*—see above.)

c. In the main camp women and young children, and uninitiated youths, gather in a cleared place where they are covered with *ngainmara* mats. This symbolically represents the unborn children of the Djanggawul Sisters, lying in the uteri (or children in the *ngainmara*, or *rangga* hidden in the *ngainmara* or bags; *vide* myth and songs). The men dance from the sacred ground and surround them, carrying spears, womeras and sticks. Invocations are called, most of which refer to places where the Djanggawul Sisters gave birth to the people; they include also sacred 'inside' terms for the *ngainmara*, and for the sacred wells, billabongs or waterholes, for the *rangga* objects, and for the spears and sticks which the men carry. Ancestral names are called too, as well as the 'inside' names of various men taking part in the ritual. Surrounding the people covered by the *ngainmara* mats, the men poke them with their spears and sticks, and they wriggle in response.

The men then dance, calling out sacred *bugali* terms for childbirth, sexual intercourse and so on. Then the women, children and youths emerge from their *ngainmara*, and sit watching the men. Final calling of *bugali* completes the ceremony.

Interpreting this ritual, Aborigines say that the women crouching under the mats are the children of the Sisters; they are 'poked' by the men and wriggle 'like children in a womb'. The poking with spears and sticks signifies the Djanggawul Brother's penis, which causes the pregnancy of his Sisters and the subsequent 'wriggling' of the children. Alternatively, the spears and sticks symbolize the *rangga*, and the 'poking' their replacement in the *ngainmara*. The casting aside of the *ngainmara* represents the birth of the children of Djanggawul, or conversely, the removal of *rangga* (symbolically,

[1] *Vide* W. L. Warner, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

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the birth). Or again, the fact that the women are covered by the *ngainmara* refers to the Djanggawul's placing all females, at birth, beneath the *ngainmara* for protection. The men are left out because they were originally placed by the Djanggawul in the coarse grass, and were unprotected: *vide* myth, Chapters 2 and 3. Underlying this ceremony is the idea that the symbolic act of childbirth will be imitated and repeated in real life, so that universal fertility may result.

d. More totemic dances take place on the sacred ground, and continue for some weeks. Various sections of the myth are enacted; for example, there are all the natural species seen at each place through which the Djanggawul passed (see myth). Two or three weeks may be given over to the performance of all the events that happened at one place. During all these ceremonies, the women provide food for the men. Outstanding dances are those of the *djanda* goanna, the *djalga* water goanna, the *lindaridj* parakeet, and spring water, the latter deriving from the *rangga*'s being plunged into the ground by the Djanggawul. At this stage certain *rangga* are used in dancing or posturing. The major, or fundamental *rangga* brought by the Djanggawul from Bralgu, are used by individual dancers, or by groups of actors who writhe along the ground with the *rangga* clasped to their bodies or held in ritual ways. All the dancers emerge from the sacred shade in which the *rangga* are kept, to the accompaniment of singing, or simply to the rhythm of the clapping sticks. Some of the most important emerge in silence; intense reverence is shown in all ritual in which the *rangga* are used.

e. Women gather around a tree or forked stick in the main camp. Men come down from the sacred ground, and the women answer their ritual cries. The ceremonial leader climbs the tree or forked stick and to the accompaniment of clapping sticks invokes the sacred *bugali*. In the western variant of this (that is, the Gunwinggu *mareiin* cult), all women and neophytes are 'steamed' over a special structure, but this does not occur in eastern Arnhem Land. The women, all painted, dance around the tree as the invocations are called. Nearly all the *bugali* are related to places and to totemic species. Pairs of dancers then enact various totemic creatures, dancing near the tree or forked stick and in front of the women. That completes the ceremony. This is continued for a period until finally the men come at night to the main camp bearing flaming torches.

The fire symbolizes that which the Sisters thought had destroyed their sacred bags containing the *rangga*, only to find later that they had been stolen by the men (see Chapter 2). Further, it signifies parakeet feathers, or the warmth of the sun, which is not present during the night.

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bank of the billabong or beach; then, followed by all the other members of the camp, they plunge into the water. Each person washes himself (or herself), and invocations are called. They all emerge, and the men dance various totemic fish.

This ritual act symbolically represents firstly the *rangga* (= people) who become wet while being brought in the Djanggawul's bark canoe from Bralgu. Secondly they, the people, are likened to *rangga*, being plunged into the water (that is, when *rangga* are not in use, or at the conclusion of the rituals, they are hidden in the water or mud, and the people's bathing represents completion of the *nara*). It has also been interpreted to mean that the Djanggawul enter the water to collect fish in their net: *vide* myth, when the Two Sisters enter the water and, opening their legs, bend forward to use them as a fish-catchment. To catch fish in this way, using one's legs as a net, is, moreover, symbolic of coitus: the fish caught are penes (penis of the Djanggawul Brother).[1] Thus, men perform the fish dances after emerging from the water. It also represents the *rangga*'s being inserted into sacred waterholes and billabongs, as was the habit of the Djanggawul; 'they put these *rangga* into wells and so on, leaving them for the new generation.'

Warner[2] mentions that the ritual bathing represents the removal of 'semen'; that is, through the 'incestuous rape of the younger Sister'. This latter conception is not found in any of our versions. Nevertheless, water may signify semen, and thus be a symbol of fertility, just as is the 'foam' of the sea mentioned in the Song Series. The assumption that the women cleanse themselves by washing[3] does not follow from our versions; for all people bathe, not only the women. The lay interpretation of any ritual bathing or washing, whether involving complete immersion or just 'baptism' by anointing with water (also fairly common), is cleansing or purification, in the sense that the sacred aura (which is ritually contagious, and can do harm if not controlled immediately after a ritual), is, for the time being at least, diverted back into the 'eternal stream' (see above). All sacred clan patterns painted on men's bodies, and the complementary sacred patterns on the breasts of women, are removed in this way, thus signifying that the *nara* is nearing completion.

i. Again the 'higher' totem dances and *rangga* emblems are shown to various neophytes in different stages of initiation. All these ceremonies are revelatory in character. These rituals then are divided into two main parts—1, those rituals shown to the younger

[1] Also used in everyday speech to refer to coitus—thus a woman 'nets a fish'.

[2] W. L. Warner, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

[3] W. L. Warner, *op. cit.*, pp. 333–4.

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Chapter Two

THE DJANGGAWUL MYTH[1]

713 In the beginning there were land and sky, animals and birds, foliage and trees. There was sea, too, in the waters of which were fish and other creatures; and upon the land were beings of totemic origin. All these things were there, as they had always been; but man, as we know him to-day, was not among them.

[715] Far out to sea, out of sight of the Arnhem Land mainland, was an island known as Bralgu (Bu'ralgu), the land of the Eternal Beings, which later became the home of the *dua* moiety dead. It lay to the south-east of Port Bradshaw, somewhere beyond Groote Eylandt.

It was here, at Bralgu, that the Djanggawul were living. They are said to have come from a big ceremony or meeting, in an unknown land far beyond the isle of Bralgu. On their arrival there they held another large ceremony, much larger than the contemporary *dua nara*, and used all their sacred objects. At that time they possessed a great many emblems, but only a few of these could be brought in the bark canoe to the Australian mainland.

They did not, however, spend very long at Bralgu, for it was only a 'half-way' resting place on the journey they were attempting.

713 There were three of them: Djanggawul himself, his elder Sister, ●831 Bildjiwuraroiju, and his younger Sister, Miralaidj. With them, too, was another man, named Bralbral. The Two Sisters and their Brother, however, were nearly always known as the Djanggawul. Djanggawul himself had an elongated penis, and each of the Two Sisters had a long clitoris; these were so long that they dragged

[1] The Yirrkalla version: this varies in certain points from the Milingimbi version, which will be presented later. *Vide Daughters of the Sun* (for publication).

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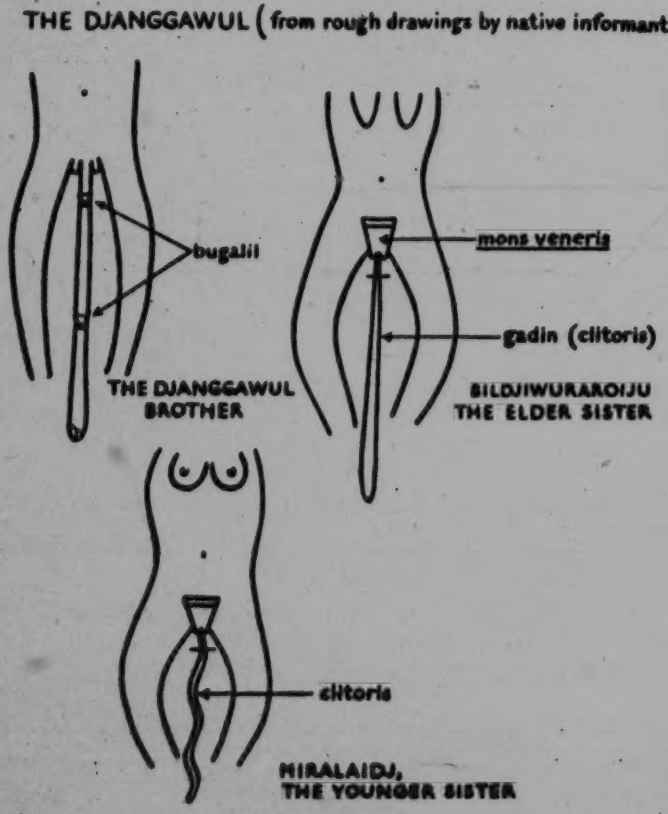
upon the ground as they walked (see Sketch 1). The penis of Djanggawul, *gurlga* or *dulparu* (ordinary name for penis) had a long foreskin (*dabin*), suggesting that it had not been circumcised; at various intervals along the penis were notches, or penis 'rings or ridges', as on an ordinary penis towards the apex. These rings



Sketch 1.

were called *bugalil*,[1] a term also applied to the sacred invocations at present used among the north-eastern Arnhem Land peoples (*dua* moiety, *bugali*, or *jiritja* moiety, *bugalili*). The elder Sister's clitoris (the ordinary term being *gadin*, and the 'inside' term *ngeribngerib*) was the longer, while the younger Sister's was almost snakelike in appearance.

[1] The secular name for the penis ridge is *kalbi* or *kapi* 'snake'.

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The Djanggawul Myth

773 At Bralgu, as they walked around with these, they left grooves in the ground from their dragging. And when the Djanggawul 831 Brother had coitus with his Sisters, he lifted aside their clitorises, entering them in the usual way. He was able to have incestuous relations with his Sisters, because at that time there were no marriage rules, no moieties, and no prohibitions. Djanggawul was the lawmaker. There is, however, no mention of Bralbral's having sexual relations with the Two Women. Djanggawul had been having coitus with Bildjiwuraroiju for a long time; her breasts had grown large and 'fallen down' with milk, and she had produced many children. Miralaidj, though, was quite young, having just passed puberty, and her breasts were rounded and firm.

They lived at Bralgu for some little time, putting people there, and leaving 'Dreamings' in the form of totemic designs, sacred emblems and body painting. They also instituted their rituals and [778] ceremonies. The Brother's penis and the Sister's clitorises were sacred emblems, like *rangga* poles.

773 At last they made ready their bark canoe, and loaded it with 'Dreamings', sacred drawings and emblems; the latter were kept in a conically-shaped *ngainmara* mat. When all this was ready they themselves, with their companion Bralbral, climbed into the canoe. Then they paddled out to sea,[1] leaving the island of Bralgu far behind. For days and days they paddled, until they sighted the Arnhem Land mainland. At last they came to it, landing near Rose River. But they soon left this part of the country, and continued paddling along the coast until they reached Jelangbara, Port Bradshaw.

Near Gangudoi Island, while still in their canoe, the Ancestral Beings saw some trees,[2] in the branches of which were perched two *lindaridj* parakeet, drying themselves in the first rays of the sun. As they passed this island, the *djigai* morning pigeon was crying. 'Maybe that bird is crying out on the land,' said the Djanggawul, and so they sang about it. They saw, too, trepang on Bauwuling (or Bauwijara) Islands, and there were many *lindaridj* on Gagubam. [778] A black cockatoo, immediately it caught sight of them, flew over to what are now the sacred sandhills near Ngadibaulwi (or Ngadibalji) rocks.

[778] As the Djanggawul were nearing Port Bradshaw, and while they were still paddling, they could see the white foam from waves breaking around the sacred rock of Gulbinboi, just outside the entrance to the bay. As they looked they saw, too, myriads of small

[1] It is said that they came on the crest of a huge wave, but Part 1 of the Song Cycle seems to contradict this.

[2] There are no trees on this island now.

The Djanggawul Myth

Djanggawul 'brother' and 'sisters', were hiding in their big shade.[1] 773
In the myth, these are called the Djanggawul Brothers. The women who came out of the Sisters are assumed to have gone out foraging for food in another direction.

Meantime, the Two Sisters had collected a lot of shells. When they waded back to dry land, they heard the whistle of the *djunmal* bird (a black, green and yellow mangrove bird), warning them that something was wrong. At once they knew that something had happened to their dilly bags, which contained the sacred *rangga*.[2]

'You know that *djunmal*, Sister,' the younger Sister asked. 'What is it crying for?'

'That bird cries to let us know,' answered the other. 'Perhaps something has happened to our sacred dilly bags. Maybe the fire has burnt them. We had better go back and look.'

They left what they were doing, and ran back towards their shade. The dilly bags were gone, and on the ground about the shade were the tracks of the men who had stolen them.

[1] That is, the Djanggawul Brother had a shade or hut, similar to that used on the *dua nara* ground, although he himself '"made" no dreaming'. All 'the beginning' belonged to the women, the Two Sisters, and all the dreamings really belonged to them. The Djanggawul Brother and his 'brothers' sat down at their shade and made fire ready to cook their food, for at that time it was the men's duty to collect all the food, and to prepare it for the women as well as for themselves.

In another version, we are told that the men and the Brother just sat there; for the Two Sisters and their 'sisters' (that is, women from their uteri) were holding a *mareiin* sacred *nara* ceremony, which was their 'own business', to which the men could not come. The women, however, were fairly close to the men, for it is said that the men 'came over by themselves on top of the women's tracks', and entered their separate shade.

In their own sacred shade the women made fire, *rindjarei*, the sacred fire dreaming, for fire comes from the redness of the women's vaginae. The twirling firestick in its groove is symbolic of coitus, because a man is warmed by lying between a woman's legs just as he is by a fire, since a woman's vulva is always 'hot'. [831 372]

After their ceremony the women hung their fighting dilly bags, decorated with tasselled pendants of red parakeet feathers, on the limb of a tree, and went out to collect shell-fish. (Here the main text takes up the story.)

[2] The men sat listening in their shade; and when they heard no noise, no singing or dancing, they said to one another, 'All right. It is no good that we are men. It is no good that women should have that sacred bag and all the dreamings, and we should have nothing. We'll take over from those women.' They all agreed, 'Yes.'

So they came up to the women's sacred shade and went inside; and there they found all the dreamings, all the *rangga* and clan patterns. They began to dance and sing the sacred songs which they had learnt by listening to the women, and which are still sung to-day in the *dua nara*. As they sang, they looked in the direction the women had taken, but saw no sign of them. Then they took down the sacred dilly bag of the women and danced with it.

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The Content of the Myth

The statement that the Two Sisters 'hit themselves on each buttock so they could make plenty of people and their vaginae would grow larger'[1] is quite different from what was mentioned in the Yirrkalla version. The point that their vaginae were small, and not large enough for sexual intercourse, is not found in the above myth. Warner mentions[2] that before their coming there was no land at all, and that they were responsible for making all the islands on the northern coast of Arnhem Land. This again does not conform. Nor does the section relating the incestuous 'rape' of the younger Djanggawul Sister; during the writer's recent work at Milingimbi, Aboriginal informants knew nothing of this. In the Milingimbi version, however, a certain amount of attention is paid to the stone *ranggi* which was lodged in the vagina of the younger Sister.[3]

A most important point does appear in Warner's version, where he states that the Two Sisters, when they first came, carried the sun. 'They were the leaders of the sun'; it was just as though it belonged to them. 'In the beginning we had the sun, the water and those Two Women—nothing more.' The sun was first.[4] A close association is inferred here between the Djanggawul Sisters and the Sun (or suns)[5]; and this becomes clearer in the Milingimbi version which we shall present later. The fact that the two daughters of the Sun Woman may be the Two Djanggawul Sisters is further borne out by the sun's association with the red breast feathers of the *lindaridj* parakeets in which is symbolized the redness of the sun. Moreover, the sun's full disc at midday is termed *dugu*, *gunbai*, or *dula*, vagina or vulva, and it is from the vulvae of the Sisters that the sun's rays come (*vide* Milingimbi version of the Djanggawul).

The dominating feature of the Yirrkalla myth is fertility, the fact that the Djanggawul were responsible for producing the original ancestors of the present Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land. This was their main function; but in treating it the myth offers a great deal of symbolism, in the way of mats, baskets and *rangga* poles, and emblems of male and female organs of generation. All the objects which the Djanggawul brought with them from Bralgu possessed life-giving qualities: the *ngainmara*, the eternally full uterus from which the people came; the *mamwulan*, which when plunged into the ground caused water to flow; and the *djuda* poles, from which grew flourishing trees. Associated with all these *dua* moiety emblems were strings of *lindaridj* breast feathers, symbolizing

[1] L. Warner, *op. cit.*, p. 337.
[2] L. Warner, *op. cit.*, pp. 336, 338 and 340.
[3] L. Warner, *op. cit.*, p. 339.
[4] L. Warner, *op. cit.*, p. 340.
[5] *Vide* Footnote 2, p. 46; see also L. Warner, *op cit.*, p. 337.

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the warmth of the sun, which made it possible for all things to live and grow.

Apart from the significance of the myth as a whole, there are several interesting features. Throughout this version the incestuous relations of the Djanggawul Brother with his Sisters are acknowledged, and repeatedly mentioned. It is said that when the Djanggawul roamed Arnhem Land, there was no marriage system. The Djanggawul themselves possessed no moieties; it was only later, when their adventures became a matter of mythology, that they were classified as belonging to the *dua* moiety. Informants point out that the Djanggawul made their own laws, and are acknowledged as law-givers. It was through their incestuous intercourse that the Two Sisters were able to produce human beings, to populate the country through which they passed. Even at that early period, the importance of sexual intercourse in relation to pregnancy must have been realized, for the part the male plays in this activity is heavily stressed: the emphasis is such that it cannot be a mere projection of present-day knowledge.

Later in their travels, however, when the Djanggawul arrived at Blue Mud Bay and also at Elcho Island,[1] the Brother seems to have altered his attitude towards incest, and to have 'punished' his sons, by circumcision, for having coitus with their sisters.

It was, nevertheless, the Djanggawul themselves, answerable to no one, who determined their own law, and continued to cohabit together. The present marriage rules of local Aborigines are said to have been instituted by the Djanggawul; apart from sacred ritual, they created and gave to their people the complete structure of their social organization, with its associated culture. Some Aborigines, however, while acknowledging the primary importance of the Djanggawul, hold that other Ancestral Beings and Spirits were responsible for instituting certain features. Other religious cults have indeed come into being, among them the important Laintjung-Banaitja constellation. The Djanggawul, however, are considered responsible for establishing the fundamental pattern of this Aboriginal society.

To-day, when that society and culture are taken for granted by its members, the major importance of the Djanggawul lies in their sacred ritual and in their doctrine, which, regarded superficially, comprises merely the outline of their travels around the Arnhem Land coast. Underlying that story, however, is a vast wealth of symbolism and allusion, which will become more apparent after we have presented the great song cycle. It is this symbolism which is expressed in sacred ritual to-day, finding expression in song and

[1] *Vide* Footnote 3, p. 43.

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This brief summary has mentioned only sparingly the symbolism manifested in the cycle, being confined chiefly to a description of the main incidents dealt with in the Songs. We may now indicate something of their symbolic significance, and the basic trends which emerge.

The most important theme, which extends throughout the whole cycle, centres about the sacred *ngainmara* mat. This is the symbolic uterus, which makes its appearance in the early stages of the epic. The *ngainmara* conical mat, while always retaining this essential significance, is also expressed in other terms; it may be a whale, a basket or dilly bag, a well, or a *nara* shade, and all these come to be associated with its particular function. Although the Songs may mention only one uterus, usually the reference is to both Sisters, so that when one *ngainmara* is described, the context may suggest two. (Nouns, in dialects of this language group, retain the same form for singular and plural.)

Incorporated in this theme, and an important adjunct to the *ngainmara*, are the sacred *rangga* emblems with their feathered strings, made chiefly from parakeet breast feathers. These *rangga* are always referred to in conjunction with the *ngainmara*; fundamentally, they symbolize the male, the *ngainmara* the female. The *rangga* are manifested in various forms, each with its separately defined function: the *djunda* goanna and goanna tail with the *mamulun*, have the power to bring forth water when plunged into the ground, while the *djunda* when 'planted' grow into green trees, and the feathered pendants attached to them become live parakeets. These are the primary *rangga* (although secondary *rangga* do exist, and are used on the *nara* ground), and they symbolize the penis. Once the basic significance of the *ngainmara* and the *rangga* is realized, and their importance as a twofold combination, many of the situations in the Songs become clear. Understanding of this simple but fundamental framework of the Djanggawul cult helps us to understand its more complex manifestations, and its wider implications. The symbolism of the *rangga* is also extended further, like the *ngainmara*, to include certain trees, the elongated penis of the Djanggawul Brother, and the people who emerge from the Sisters.

Although the *rangga* does not invariably represent the male (for example, it is frequently used to signify both male and female children emerging from the 'mat'), as the *ngainmara* does the female, this is its more usual significance. The testes, however, are absent from this constellation. It is possible that the hanging of sacred baskets from the *rangga* may have some relevance here, but since this is not the Aboriginal interpretation we shall not speculate further along those lines.

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533 The two elements, the *ngainmara* and *rangga*, in their various forms,
539 serve as a combination through which two basic situations find
831 expression. The symbolism relates in the first place to sexual intercourse, in the second to pregnancy and eventual childbirth. Apart from such symbolic representations (although these are more numerous), direct references to coitus and childbirth are made, and help to explain the others.

Let us consider the first situation. *Rangga* emblems are kept within the *ngainmara* mat, being from time to time withdrawn and inserted into the ground; they are put away in the *ngainmara* and covered up, in sacredness; they are plunged into the ground to make wells, so that water gushes forth; *djuda rangga* are 'planted', so that trees grow from them; totemic objects and animals (birds or reptiles) are put into a sacred well, so that the water rises and overflows; *rangga* are put in the shelter of a *nara* shade, or returned to a sacred basket or dilly bag; parakeets fly into the *ngainmara*, basket, or well and are hidden within it out of sight; and the Djanggawul Brother erects his *rangga* to place it within the *ngainmara*. All these situations, and many more, symbolize the insertion of the Djanggawul Brother's penis in the *ngainmara*, which although really the uterus, may also signify vagina or vulva. The most complete symbolic representation of coitus is the plunging into the ground of the *manwulan rangga* forming a well, with gushing water (that is, penis insertion/vagina/ejaculation/withdrawal). The rising water flooding the countryside signifies fertilization.

In the second case, the same elements are employed, but their significance is altered: the *ngainmara* (like its various associated forms) is solely the uterus, and the *rangga* and feathered strings are children (people or *rangga* folk). This seems, indeed, to be their most important manifestation. It is expressed in a number of obvious situations which have been indicated throughout this work. For example, *rangga* emblems and feathered strings are removed from the mouth of the *ngainmara* mat (shade, basket or well); the *ngainmara* is heavy, being full of *rangga* people; fish, which are declared totemic, are caught in fish traps (constructed from *rangga* poles); and fish escape from the mouth of the whale, or are swallowed when brought in by the rising tide. The ideal symbolic representation is the *ngainmara* mat full of *rangga*, which are later removed (that is, uterus/pregnancy/delivery of *rangga* folk).

These two correlated themes, then, are basic to the cycle; together, they centre about one of the fundamental drives of mankind. The need for sexual satisfaction is simply and symbolically expressed, with a complete absence of consciously erotic manifestations; following this come pregnancy and, eventually, childbirth. The

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importance of physiological paternity has not, moreover, been left a vague issue. The complementary rôles of male and female are established traditionally, both symbolically and (to a lesser degree) directly.

In addition to these, and in varying degrees linked with them, there are a number of subsidiary threads. There are four predominating themes, all in some degree interrelated, and almost invariably used in conjunction with the *ngainmara-rangga* concept. The first is crystallized in the umbilical cord, which is symbolically manifested in a variety of forms, the most important being the elongated clitorises of the Two Djanggawul Sisters, the long penis of the Brother, the prepuce, rays from the Morning Star, rays from the setting sun, feathered strings, and so on. Various examples are found in the Songs: the Djanggawul Brother cuts his long penis, after he and his companions have stolen the sacred basket and *rangga* from the Sisters; he shortens his Sisters' clitorises after the theft, when he and his companions have taken over control of the *nara*; and feathered strings removed from the *ngainmara* are arranged on the surface of the ground. The ideal illustration of the theme is as follows: *rangga* folk have their foreskins cut immediately after they have issued from the *ngainmara*-uterus, the foreskin symbolizing the umbilical cord, and its cutting their severance from the Mother; this is the intent of circumcisional initiation, with its subsequent 'rebirth'.

The second theme is connected with the sun. This element is symbolically manifested in several ways, the most obvious being: rays of light from the setting sun; the red reflections from the sunset, caught on the breast feathers of the *lindaridj* parakeet; the feathered *rangga* strings, the sacred basket pendants and the hair string waistband intertwined with red feathers; the parakeet itself, with breast and throat feathers; fire; blood (flowing after birth, at menstruation, or as a result of the Djanggawul Brother's breaking the arm-band blockage in the younger Sister's vagina); red ochre; and the red walls of the vagina or labia majora. One of the most strongly emphasized of these is the parakeet, with its red breast feathers, constantly appearing throughout the cycle.

The third theme relates to water, in its fresh or salt manifestations. The pattern is set during the initial stage of the Djanggawul's journey to the north Australian mainland. The movement of the sea is brought about (or intensified) through their paddling, and the presence of fish and marine creatures. This causes the ebb and flow of the tides. When the Djanggawul leave the sea to travel inland, and later along the coast, this theme is continued in the well waters rising and overflowing in conjunction with the tidal fluctuations. Even when the wells predominate, however, the sea

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533 is not forgotten; the original theme is recalled again and again
539 throughout the cycle. It is the sea, too, which receives much attention in the *nara* rituals (for example, in those performed by *rangga* folk, mentioned in the cycle). Nevertheless, the importance of the
[770] well waters must not be underestimated. Apart from their association with the sea and its tides, they are in their own right spirit centres; and these are sacred, for the *rangga* emblems have been put within them or within their mud, and *djuda* have been planted around them. Moreover, the well is identified with the uterus, with the *ngainmara*, and with the sacred *nara* shade.

533 The fourth theme is concerned with seminal fluid, which is
539 symbolized by the foam of the sea, or by rough water surging from an overflowing well. It is this foam which splashes on to the
• 831 *rangga* emblems and *ngainmara* mat during the Djanggawul's journey from Bralgu, staining not only these objects and the feathered strings, but also the long clitorises and penis, and leaving on them a distinctive 'sea smell'. References are made throughout the cycle to the drying of the feathered strings of the *rangga*, and of the baskets.

533 These elements then, with the *ngainmara* and *rangga*, provide the
539 skeletal structure or framework of the cycle, upon which the various situations have been constructed and elaborated.

Apart from the purely human element, reflected in the removal of *rangga* folk who serve as a nucleus from which has grown the present Aboriginal population, the cycle is concerned, in its wider implication, with the universe about them. The Djanggawul are said to 'make country' as they travel. We have seen however, from both the Myth and the Songs, that the country as such was already there on their arrival. Where the Songs describe their 'making country', therefore, we must assume that they merely put additional physiographical features. They made the sacred sandhill at the Place of the Mauwulan, which is symbolically represented in every *nara* to-day; they made innumerable wells, both sacred and secular, and planted multitudes of trees; and from their *rangga* and feathered strings birds, reptiles, animals and vegetables (yams) came into being, or became totemic. The Morning Star was sent for them by the Spirit people at Bralgu, to guide them through the sea to Port Bradshaw. And the sun came up for them, driving away the darkness and lighting up the land, sending its glowing rays in every direction, and warming all it touched.

533 Apart too from the matter of human fetility, the cycle concerns
539 the fructification of the land, symbolized in the fluctuating tides of the sea, and the rising well waters. The plunging into the ground
831 of the *mauwulan rangga*, with water gushing forth at its withdrawal, does not represent human sexual intercourse alone; symbolic coitus

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is taking place with the earth, so that it will be fertilized. The well water overflows and spreads across the land; the incoming tides push up the shallow tidal creeks and cover the low coastal plains: all symbolize the fertilization of the land. New vegetation will grow; the dormant grass and plants will send out their shoots; trees will bear leaves, blossoms and fruit; and the natural species will increase. The *djuda rangga* carried by the Djanggawul are always 'planted' near well waters, and their roots are said to be like penes that fertilize the earth. Billowing clouds from the north-west beckon the Djanggawul onwards, as they move from place to place; and the intensity of the sun's heat scorches the grass, making the shadows of the clouds welcome and desirable, and drying the moistened *rangga*. All this symbolizes the coming monsoonal rains, which will replenish the earth, renew all plant and vegetable matter and the natural species. Further, it indicates man's place in the universe, emphasizing the fundamental similarity between himself and his environment. The sexual drive in man results in the increase of his own species, just as he sees to be the case among the living creatures around him: and that basic theme is extended and elaborated to include his whole physical environment. According to this point of view, the earth itself must, therefore, be fertilized in much the same way as man—through symbolic coitus, the plunging *manwulan*, the piercing *djuda* roots, the flooding well, and the spreading incoming tide. All this to the Aborigine of north-eastern and north-central Arnhem Land, living as he does in close proximity to his environment, is real and vital. It constitutes for him a faith which is based essentially on his own experience, on a fundamental human and animal drive, projected on to his non-human and (as *we* see it) inanimate environment.

The Djanggawul myth and its songs, then, may be regarded as centring on the two primary drives of man: the first, sex, with its natural consequences, the second, food, which enables him to survive. Both are of equal importance, and both receive consideration in this cycle. The dominating interest however is that of sex, in a broader sense than this is usually understood in our own society; the Aboriginal thesis is that through the operation of this drive seasonal fluctuations will occur, and will automatically ensure the provision of food. From the Aboriginal standpoint, then, man's survival is essentially dependant on the success of the sexual drive: for food cannot become available unless the natural species copulate and increase, unless the rains fall, the wells overflow and the tides spread and fertilize the land. This attitude to them is fundamental, and for that reason it has become an outstanding theme in the sacred Djanggawul cycle.

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These factors obviously centre about the survival of the Aboriginal social group, and in that respect they suggest an important sociological attitude. The Djanggawul Sisters, through their perpetual pregnancy, and their ability to produce great numbers of *rangga* folk, the ancestors of the present-day Aborigines, express their true function as Fertility Mothers. They define the physical differences between males and females, between the *rangga* and the mat; expressing this symbolically, they put the *rangga* boys who emerge from their wombs into the coarse grass, the *rangga* girls into the shelter of the *ngainmara*-uterus mat. By stressing the sacredness of womankind, this Aboriginal culture has enshrined motherhood, for it is realized that the continuity of the group is dependent primarily, and in a more spectacular way, on the female. To ensure this fertility, however, 'that the *rangga* within the *ngainmara* may remain plentiful', the contribution of the virile male is essential. The myth, therefore, acknowledges both physiological paternity and maternity. The *rangga* is as sacred as the *ngainmara*; and insemination (symbolically expressed in a variety of forms) is a biological necessity in the fertility sequence of coitus, conception, pregnancy and childbirth.

Two other important features receive attention in this cycle. The first, and perhaps the more important from a sociological point of view, is the division of labour between the sexes. The Djanggawul Sisters lose their sacred basket or dilly bag and *rangga* emblems, and the men take over control of the *nara* ritual. Now the Sisters must grind the cycad nut to make 'bread'; their 'hands must be whitened with its flour'. This mythological incident indicates, symbolically, the present division of activities between the sexes. It is not a question of any alteration in woman's status: she is not subordinated, or relegated to an 'inferior' position. On the contrary, stress is placed on the complementary nature of their activities. Woman must not resemble man, any more than man may resemble woman, the essential nature and implications of each (apart from biological factors) being culturally determined; hence the clitoris of each Sister is cut, so that it may not resemble a man's penis. Man may not be idle, merely collecting and preparing food while woman performs all sacred ritual, possesses all the *rangga* emblems and in addition carries out her important task of producing children. If women are to ensure the continuity of the group through childbearing, then men must perform the sacred ritual and do the more strenuous work; for this reason, so we are told, the men stole from the Sisters the sacred basket and *rangga* and took charge of the *nara* ritual.

The second feature is the institution of the sacred *nara* ritual,

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FAMILY LIFE IN THE JUNGLE

842 [177] Theories of conception and birth have been severely jolted in recent years, for until recently it was not known that intercourse had any connection with conception, and Yulengor regarded it as being merely a natural and satisfying [831] function. There are no virgins in aboriginal society, for at an early age a girl is handed over to her husband and is married for the rest of her life. In parts of western Arnhem [574] Land, when hordes gather for ceremonies, their hosts provide [837] them with food and also advance their wives for the visitors' well-being. The question of illegitimate children does not [848] arise, for births are thought to be the work of a spirit.

842 787 At some time when the potential father is hunting, the spirit of his prospective child comes to him and presents him with a large fish or turtle and enables him to spear it. Not yet comprehending the omen, the man returns to camp with the spirit at heel, and when all are asleep this spirit enters the mother and begins its preparations for birth. In a variation of this belief, the spirit follows the mother when she goes for water, and jumps into the water so as to enter the woman. When a man knows that his wife is to become a mother he endeavours to recall some unusual experience that has befallen him in hunting. His mind dwells on any large fish he has caught, perhaps in the last month, or maybe several years previously, and he regards this incident as marking the coming of the spirit-child.

842 177 Half-caste children compelled a readjustment of these ideas. First it was assumed that eating the white man's food or the wearing of white clothing caused white-skinned offspring. An anthropologist, visiting an Arnhem Land mission station at the invitation of a missionary of irreproachable character, asked an aboriginal why his normal full-blood son had a light skin. The father's startling reply was: 'The child's mother works in the missionary's house.'

842 [833] According to a revised and popular birth theory, intercourse is necessary only as an act of preparation. In itself